

TOP STORY: BLACK AMERICA'S FEAR OF A GAY PLANET  
August 23 - September 5, 1993

# IN THESE TIMES

the alternative newsmagazine

## March on Main Street

*Thirty years after  
the March on  
Washington,  
Sen. Paul Wellstone  
urges the  
American left  
to head home.*

Interview, page 14



\$2.50 / CANADA \$3.00



Clinton's Pyrrhic budget victory, page 22



# EDITORIAL

## CLINTON'S VERSION OF SUPPLY-SIDE ECONOMICS

**P**resident Clinton's new tax bill restores a modicum of progressivity to the federal tax system and will probably help hold interest rates down for a while. That's the good news.

But Clinton also argues that reducing the deficit will stimulate the economy in the long run, by freeing up for investment some of the money that would otherwise go to paying interest on government bonds. He even claims that it will be an incentive for investment now. This is another version of the supply-side argument used by the Reagan-Bush administrations. It is based on the myth that capital formation—investment—precedes expansion of incomes and employment. But, as William Greider points out in *Who Will Tell the People: The Betrayal of American Democracy*, the historical record shows just the opposite. Investment depends more on demand created by high levels of employment and well-paying jobs than on the availability or low cost of capital.

Economists not connected to the administration are predicting that the new budget will put a damper on the current recovery. In part, these economists, too, are using a supply-side argument: they worry that Clinton's taxes on the wealthy will negatively affect investment. Yet they also recognize that the administration's deficit-reduction measures—cuts in spending on Medicare and Medicaid, in military outlays and in the federal workforce—will have a depressing effect on the overall economy. With \$30 billion taken out of the economy to reduce the deficit this year, they point out, there will be less money to spend and therefore less incentive to invest.

As this view implies, a healthy economy depends on an increasing ability to consume. Administration officials point to the slight drop in the unemployment rate in July (it fell a bit to 6.8 percent) and to the creation of 162,000 new jobs as evidence that the trend is toward more jobs. But, like their Republican predecessors, they gloss over the

reality of low-paying, temporary, part-time jobs that increasingly make up our employment pattern.

Of the new jobs created in July, 153,000 were in the service sector and 4,000 were in state government. Employment in manufacturing, where the well-paying union jobs are, dropped by 13,000, although this loss is smaller than in recent months. Most significantly, 27,000 of the new jobs, or about one in five, came through temporary-help agencies.

In other words, the July figures show that the current recovery is continuing the pattern of the Reagan years, when well-paying jobs disappeared and part-time, poverty-level work flourished. As Greider recently pointed out in *Rolling Stone*, the largest private employer in the United States is no longer General Motors but Manpower Inc., a temporary employment agency. And thousands of such firms flourish

all over the country, altering the meaning of work for millions of Americans.

Nor is temp work any longer restricted to the low-wage service sector. In California, Bank of America has been converting most of its full-time jobs to part-time positions without benefits. The bank's goal is to have 80 percent of its staff working part time, half of them at fewer than 20 hours a week.

During the Reagan years, when 18 million new jobs were allegedly created, temp work grew 10 times faster than overall employment, Greider reminds us. And this reality is what led Bill Clinton to campaign on the slogan that anyone who works for a living ought not to be poor.

In office, however, Clinton has continued his predecessor's policy of encouraging investment while ignoring the reality in which Americans who work, or want to work, find themselves. While his new budget bill does shift the income-tax burden slightly back toward the wealthiest Americans, he has done nothing—and apparently plans to do nothing—to create jobs that pay a living wage or to discourage the use of part-time workers.

***Clinton's budget  
is based on  
the idea that  
lowering the  
cost of capital  
will be enough  
to restore  
robust growth.  
But who  
will consume  
the fruits  
of this new  
investment?***

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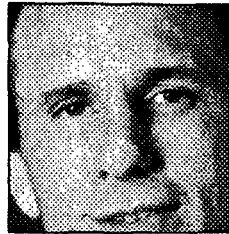
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 to look homeward.*

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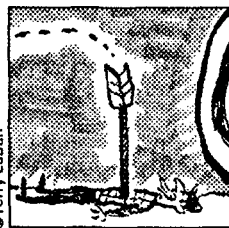


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©Terry LaBan

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# LETTERS

## Antitrust needed

Congratulations on the major thrust of your editorial (*ITT*, July 12) regarding the role of the insurance industry in health care reform.

However, as a former Federal Trade Commissioner under President Johnson, I take issue with your statement that subjecting the insurance industry to federal antitrust laws would be a "meaningless step."

In fact, repeal of the current immunity of the insurance industry from the antitrust laws would subject them to the price-fixing, unfair trade practice and misleading and deceptive advertising prohibitions of the FTC Act and also subject them to criminal sanctions for price-fixing under the Sherman Act. These are not meaningless prohibitions: witness the enormous lobby that the insurance industry mounts every time their legislative immunity is threatened either on the state or on the federal level.

I agree that the federal antitrust

agencies in the last 10 years have virtually abdicated their jurisdiction over illegal mergers, but it is important to make sure that these laws do apply to the industry. Enforcement policies of administrations change and they should have ample tools with which to keep business in line. Also, under the Sherman Act, treble damage actions can be brought by the private bar to redress injuries suffered as a result of violations of these laws. These are important sanctions to industry and do serve to keep them in line.

I hope *In These Times* and its readers will support repeal of the McCarran Act, which confers immunity from antitrust laws on the insurance industry.

Mary Gardiner Jones  
Washington

## Atom hoax redux

Tim Wohlforth (Viewpoint, July 26) makes some comments in his "Give war a chance" that typify why

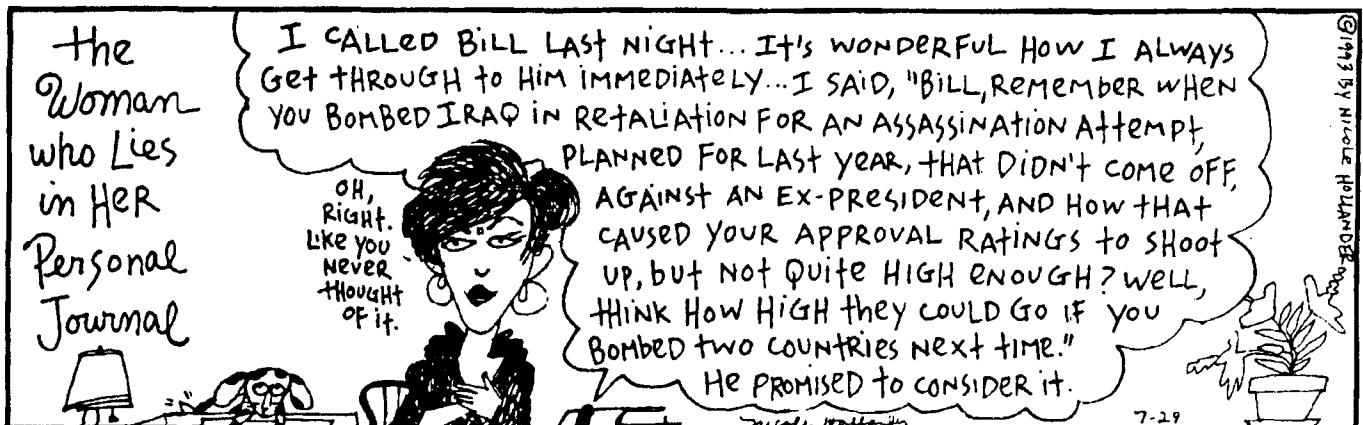
many a leftie has shifted rightward. He's on target (pun intended) when he states that we need to work toward the establishment of a permanent United Nations peace force, but he's way off when he says we must oppose interventions such as in the Gulf War and the recent missile attacks, which are carried out to further imperial interests rather than those of the people.

There's little doubt that the U.S. has acted shamefully on many occasions throughout the world, but the leftist notion that the Gulf War was wrong indicates that they are out of touch with reality or just as selective about truth as their mirror image on the right. Sure, to put it politely, President Bush left a lot to be desired. You want to say he'd sell his soul for oil ... agreed; that Hussein was set up ... possibly; that Bush was directly involved in helping to create Hussein's military and consequently bears a measure of responsibility for the Gulf War ... I'll buy that, and I hope that whole contemptible issue is exposed.

However, the bottom line that the left chooses to ignore is that Hussein was within 18 months of deploying nuclear weapons. I don't give a damn what Bush's motives were. The immediate issue was to defang Hussein or face the prospect of a nuclear war in the region. And neither should we have waited for sanctions to somehow curb his nuclear ambitions, as he already had supplies stockpiled. To go in later might have meant exposing our troops to nukes, or would Wohlforth prefer

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



that, since he doesn't think it's sporting of us to select our targets carefully? Yeah, a nuclear war would sure level the playing field—literally.

**Phillip Cutler**  
Costa Mesa, Calif.

*Editor's note: Although some experts disagree on how close Saddam Hussein was to developing a crude atom bomb, none believe it could have been done in much less than two years. That's one bomb and no means of delivery. How could that be used? What would happen if it were? Why would Hussein commit mass murder just to ensure his own nation's obliteration? And why should the U.S. destroy Iraq to prevent Hussein from acquiring what Israel, South Africa and other nations already possess in abundance and with greater ability to deploy? It just doesn't make sense.*

## Crash landing

By quoting Merrill Lynch airline industry analyst Candace Browning (ITT, June 14), Kevin Kelly has fallen into the trap management always throws at the press concerning pilot pay and hours. By stating pilots earn more than \$109,000 for less than 50 hours of work, Kelly proves he is ignorant of basic work rules and conditions related to airline flying.

First, the federal government limits flight hours to 1,000 per year. That means the government limits me and all commercial pilots to the equivalent of 125 eight-hour days per year. Flight hours are the logged time that an aircraft is moving under its own power for the purpose of flight. It would be comparable to a reporter or analyst being able to log only the time spent typing or working on a word processor or computer. Bet it is less than two hours a day. It would be like a plumber being paid only when he was sweating a joint, turning a wrench or cutting a pipe—not the time planning, measuring or preparing.

My particular airline has a pay cap of 85 hours per month. For the month of July I was paid for 84 hours 12

minutes. For this I spent 118 hours 22 minutes on duty, during which I flew 69 hours 17 minutes. I was gone from my home base (not my home) for 252 hours 41 minutes. Due to the uncertainty of my occupation—I am now with my third major airline in 10 years, one having shut down due to bankruptcy, even with dramatic give-backs by its employees—I choose to maintain my residence some five hours from my flying base. In addition to those hours listed above, I spend many extra hours and some nights in cheap motels away from my family before or after going to work. I choose to do this because management is famous for opening and closing flying bases at a whim. I spend three eight-hour days in ground school and two seven-hour days in the simulator, for which I get paid and credited toward the 85-hour cap at the rate of 2 hours 50 minutes per day and put my license on the line. Isn't it a shame doctors aren't given "check rides"?

I am subject to random drug testing as a result of the knee-jerk reaction of Elizabeth Dole. This activity costs the airlines millions of dollars and less than one one-hundredth of 1 percent of all airline employees have tested positive, and far less than that among pilots. Besides, we are tested at the conclusion of our series of flights, not before, so that if safety were truly the purpose a person would be tested when they first reported for duty instead of after they've flown passengers. It is like closing the gate after the horse escapes. I won't get into the civil rights arguments.

Southwest is notoriously anti-union, as is nearly every company of any description operating in Texas. To obtain work as a pilot for Southwest, a person must obtain a captain's rating on the aircraft, even though a young person may be years and years from reaching that exalted position. That rating for \$10,000-plus is available from—you guessed it—Southwest Airlines. There is no retirement plan for the company's employees, other than management. The airline has also purchased their competition, shutting

down its operations and putting those employees on the street instead of integrating them into Southwest's workforce. Southwest serves drinks only and does not interline luggage. Think about that the next time you complain about an "airplane meal" on a three-hour flight. On Southwest, it's peanuts, baby, and that is all. Southwest does not assign seats but issues color-coded boarding cards for a "scrambling, grab a seat and hold on" departure. Run 'em on and run 'em off. When a former competitor undercut Southwest's fare by \$4, it was charged with predatory pricing and fined. Southwest does a nice job, but it did not get where it is by efficiency alone. There was a lot of influence, a lot of backstabbing and a lot of luck involved.

Airline flying is a well-paid job. I have enjoyed many years in this occupation, even with the furloughs and shutdowns. But if this is the mold of the "new industry," if this is what the traveling public desires, I am happy to be retiring soon, with a grossly reduced retirement, due to the previously mentioned bankruptcy.

**Don B. Walther**  
Grand Prairie, Texas

## Airlines and labor

A few thoughts on Kevin Kelly's "Flying through turbulence" (ITT, June 14). It states that the government should not act, but rather allow the industry to solve its own problems. Well, the government has done that since deregulation, and as the losses continue to grow, the "success" of that strategy is clear.

Most of the problems in the airline industry can be traced back to the greedy, self-serving executives who garner obscene compensation. It is they who have made bad decisions. It is they who reward themselves with bonuses, stock-options and golden parachutes for a job poorly done. Many of the players move from one airline to another wreaking havoc as they go. Their focus is their own personal power and profit, not the long-



term well-being of the industry.

The article is against any form of reregulation; but economists will agree that there are certain industries that lend themselves to regulation. The government could then allow the industry to find fares that are fair to both the consumer and the airlines. It would not be a "hopeless task."

Kelly is against any limits on the length of time an airline can remain in bankruptcy, but there ought to be limits. A carrier protected by bankruptcy can charge any fare, profitable or not, and use the cash to operate. It isn't responsible for paying its creditors like the non-bankrupt carriers with which it competes. This places the solvent airlines in the position of matching the below-cost fares, which only serves to weaken the entire industry.

I wholeheartedly agree that there are major rifts between labor and management at all the airlines. The article holds up Northwest and TWA as two airlines that have "won over" labor. The labor groups have been strong-armed into accepting a minority stake in the hollow shell of the once-stable airline. This is hardly a testimonial to management's superior skills of reconciliation. The workers at Northwest will likely end up with Al-Chechi's leftovers as well, but they have accepted partial ownership simply to keep their jobs. This is not a standard the rest of the industry should strive to emulate.

I work for one of the Big Three, and I am not to blame for the mess that is the airline industry today. This article was, in my opinion, anti-labor and anti-union. I worked for five years without a raise or a contract while my airline was posting record profits. When we finally came to an agreement, my raise didn't even keep up with inflation. Contrary to what was stated, we are not less but more productive than ever before; we work longer hours with fewer crew members.

One of the reasons I am a longtime subscriber and contributor to *In These Times* is the fairness and balance given to all viewpoints. But I look to ITT for news on labor and worker issues that cannot be found in the mainstream

press. This article would be right at home on the pages of a business magazine, and while I appreciate the opportunity to read it, I would enjoy a counterpoint from someone like David Moberg, who has a more positive perspective on labor.

Elizabeth Anderson  
Makakilo, Hawaii

**Kevin Kelly replies:** *I take no argument with Don Walther's account of his flight hours or the stupidity of drug testing of crews, given the historical results. But the simple fact is this: Southwest pilots on average are more productive than pilots at the Big Three. This is partly because of work rules, and partly a result of the way Southwest flies—landing and taking-off in 20 minutes as opposed to 45 minutes to several hours for the Big Three. Indeed, one issue the larger carriers must address is how to disassemble their hubs—which management unwisely expanded beyond all economic reason—to boost productivity. Employees did not create this problem. I wouldn't want to blame Walther and his fellow pilots for inefficiencies introduced by managers.*

*But what about Southwest? Walther loses his balance at this point. Fact is, Southwest is unionized and its pilots earn on average \$93,000—impressive, considering they don't fly big planes on long trips. Certainly, Texas is anti-union, but neighboring American Airlines is also heavily unionized. Southwest did buy a competing airline during the mid-'80s, and it did muffle the integration of the two carriers, which cost the airline bundles of money. But Southwest is no more nasty, or more given to using influence than American or United. All surveys show, in fact, that most Southwest employees enjoy working for the company, a claim no Big Three carrier (witness Walther's own bitterness) could ever make.*

*I won't argue about Southwest's service. They get me where I want to go on-time and I pack my own lunch. I'll take Southwest's \$122 one-way fare between Chicago and Dallas with*

*the Oklahoma City stopover any day, especially when American wants to charge me \$345 for the honor.*

*Anderson's letter is less worthy. She correctly points out that recent employee deals have compelled workers to pick up the pieces of airlines busted by bad dealmakers. And she also correctly mentions the predilection of airline executives to pay themselves too much. But on productivity she is wrong. Recent studies say the industry is as much as 20 percent less productive today than it was five years ago.*

*What about re-regulation? Why should consumers pay more when Southwest and other carriers can make money charging less? Since when is a \$458 airline ticket—the current average fare—cheap? Fact is, airline load factors are falling because prices are too high. And the tired old argument put forth by the Big Three that industry troubles are to be blamed on bankrupt carriers also holds little weight. No study has ever proven the point. That said, I think the bankruptcy law revision of the late '70s was a tragic error that has cost thousands of jobs and should be reversed.*

*But the issue of employee concessions for equity is more complicated than Anderson wishes to admit. Unlike past deals, employees at Northwest and TWA received significant control over their company's decision-making and tough job-security provisions, along with equity. While cash-poor TWA may sputter anyway, the Northwest deal has set a pattern for other employee groups to follow. Indeed, United's union groups have already offered \$3.66 billion in concessions over five years in exchange for 60 percent of the carrier. They reason that, since the airline is going to ask for concessions anyway, why not get something for it?*

*I also don't like the fact that the carriers are in trouble, some because of bad decision-making. But that doesn't get around the need to do something to save jobs and establish some employee control over decision-making in the future. This current crisis offers the perfect opportunity to do so.*

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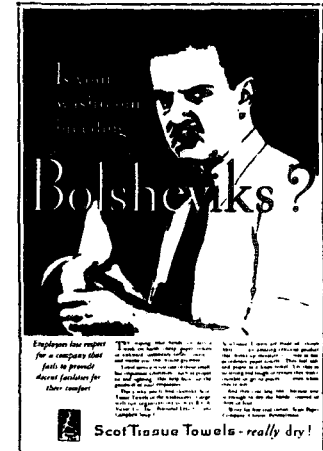
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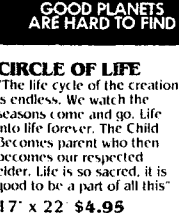

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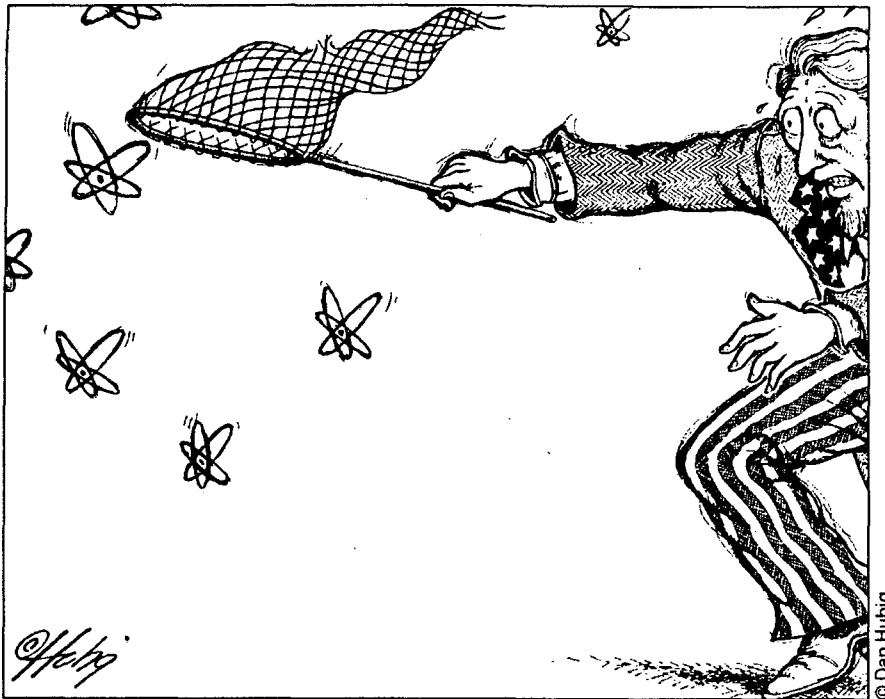
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# InSHORT



## OPERATION DESERT SCORN

*The government assaults the Mojave Desert*

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the federal agency in charge of millions of acres of California desert, is considering the proposals. Each of them involves the federal government selling public property or granting land-use permits—and waste-management firms getting lucrative contracts.

One of the most controversial projects is a permanent low-level radioactive waste dump that the state of California hopes to build at Ward Valley in the eastern Mojave. The state plans to bury radioactive wastes in shallow, unlined trenches above an aquifer estimated to be one-quarter the size of Lake Tahoe, and only 18 miles

Environmentalists and Native Americans are battling against no less than eight different proposals to build giant garbage landfills, toxic repositories and a nuclear waste dump in the Mojave Desert.



By Woody Igou

## Family values at a distance

A recent report on celebrity mothers in *Redbook* magazine outlined a list of "Hollywood's stellar moms."



Among those singled out for achievement was Candice Bergen, for her

devout treatment of daughter Chloe, age 7. The justification was that "Chloe has had the same nanny since she was 6 months old."

Not to mention Mom's free "Friends and Family" chats with baby.

## Taking a constitutional

Ralph Nader, among others, has taken the ACLU to task for receiving more than \$500,000



in contributions from tobacco companies, including Philip Morris Companies, Inc. Coinci-

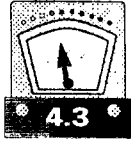
dentally, the ACLU strongly supports the right of cigarette advertising under the First Amendment. A spokesman stated that this is an "old issue."

Alas, the many forms of addiction.



## Why gloves are required

The *Anniston Star* in Alabama reports that the licenses of two competing ambulance-service technicians have been



suspended after they fought each other at the scene of a fatal bridge collapse. Witnesses

said that the technicians fought over the right to treat the victims of the accident, in which two people were killed. A spoonful of testosterone makes the medicine go down.

## Potatoes on the couch

In an inevitable progression, the *Geraldo* show is now providing the first after-care program for "victims of post-talk show stress." Since a victim of incest called following the



show to state he was going to kill his father, 27 people have been "in one stage or another

of recovery" in the show's program.

How about a little after-care for the viewers?

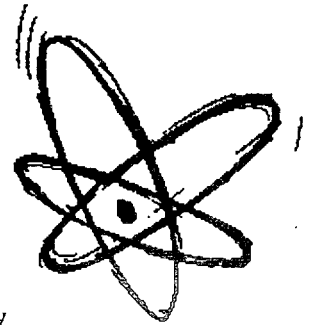
*Stunned by a stupid statement? Nauseated by a noxious news item? Livid about a ludicrous lie? Contact the APPALL-O-METER, In These Times, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.*

## APPALL-O-METER SCALE

1. Weightless banality
2. Green Acres stupidity
3. Malicious cretinism
4. Howard Sternesque
5. Mary Matalin mean
6. Gangrenous venality
7. A touch of evil
8. A cancer in the Zeitgeist
9. Et tu, Pol Pot?
10. Horseperson of the Apocalypse

from the Colorado River.

In January, just before George Bush left office, former Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan attempted to transfer 1,000 acres of federal land to the state of California to build the dump. But a coalition of environmental groups and Indian tribes brought a lawsuit before federal court and gained an injunction against the land transfer under the protections and prohibitions of the Endangered Species Act. New Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has rescinded Lujan's transfer for the time being, has not excluded the possibility of a future transfer.



Environmentalists fear that the dump would endanger a 70-million-year-old species of desert tortoise, which was listed as a threatened species in 1990. Ward Valley is in an area considered by wildlife experts as a habitat essential for the recovery and survival of the species.

Despite promises to the contrary, California Gov. Pete Wilson has refused to hold adjudicated hearings on the dump project. Instead, Wilson has announced plans to license US Ecology—a waste-management firm responsible for leaky dumps in Kentucky and Illinois—and to begin construction as soon as the state can obtain the land from the federal government.

If the dump opens, the state would assume liability for nuclear wastes generated by some of the nation's largest corporations. The California state controller has estimated that the Ward Valley project could cost California taxpayers as much as \$500 million in cleanup costs from leakages and accidents.

Moreover, project opponents are afraid that Ward Valley would become a national dump. They point to Nuclear Regulatory Commission "emergency access" powers to direct radioactive wastes from other states and military facilities to any open dump. To date, 17 states have applied to ship their nuclear wastes to Ward Valley.

With two of the nation's three permanent low-level dumps due to close, California would receive tremendous pressure to open its borders to radioactive materials from over 100 nuclear reactors across the nation. This would turn the desert valley into a "national sacrifice area," off-limits for the next 12,000 generations.

Ward Valley has become a major environmental issue in California with national and international implications. But it is far from being the only concern of desert residents.

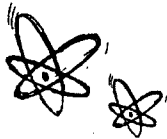


The Eagle Mountain dump, located directly adjacent to the Joshua Tree National Monument, would receive over 20,000 tons of household garbage from Los Angeles every day. The company seeking to operate the dump is Browning-Ferris Inc., infamous for violations of safety standards, as well as for price-fixing, bribery and physical intimidation.

The Bolo Station Landfill near Amboy would import another 20,000 tons of household refuse by rail to create a pile of waste 420 feet high. The mountain of trash would be as large as 100 of the great pyramids of Egypt. The dump project is a joint venture involving the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad and Waste Management Inc., the largest garbage handler in the

nation with a history of violations of anti-trust and environmental laws.

Other dump proposals for the Mojave include the 1,200-acre Hidden Valley Toxic Waste Repository near Newberry Springs, slated to receive 450,000 tons of toxic residuals during the next century. The BLM would have to approve access to the site by roads that would cut through a critical habitat for the endangered bighorn sheep. The 385-acre Broadwell Dry Lake hazardous waste repository would create a pool of toxic materials



separated from the environment by a plastic liner. The

California desert also faces numerous ventures such as cyanide-leach gold mines, oil and gas pipelines and the ravages of off-road vehicles.

Desert activists have challenged the federal government's land-use policies, demanding that the BLM develop a regional plan that considers the cumulative effects of all proposed development in the fragile California desert.

—Philip M. Klasky

## TRUTH ABOUT CONSEQUENCES

*Tracing the social impacts of global commerce*

How many companies does it take to manufacture a light bulb? In the global economy, dozens of smaller firms worldwide—from raw materials extractors to transportation services—may be involved in

the production, distribution and disposal of a single product from a multinational corporation. If somewhere along the line a river is polluted in Brazil, or a Chinese prisoner is put to work as slave labor, who is responsible?

David Sarokin, director of the Washington, D.C.-based Public Data Project—which advocates better public access to corporate information—believes a Social and Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) can promote better corporate responsibility. According to initial drafts of his SEIS proposal, U.S. companies making \$5 billion a year or more should be required to regularly compile a public report assessing the social and environmental impacts of their operations. The proposal states that “these impacts would be assessed over the entire life-cycle of the corporation’s products, from the moment materials are extracted from the Earth to their ultimate disposal by the end consumer.”

For example, an SEIS prepared by Nike “would report not only on conditions at their supply plants, but on their main manufacturing materials: what is the source of their rubber, glue and leather ... of the machinery for manufacture and the wood for shipping crates; what steps have they taken to satisfy themselves that their purchases of these materials are not supporting the insupportable?” With an SEIS program, America’s largest corporations could no longer claim innocence through ignorance of the circumstances of production. Although the effort involved in preparing an SEIS would be considerable, Sarokin emphasizes that “we’re talking about companies that are as big as Switzerland. ... Given the scale of these companies and their access to resources, the preparation of the SEIS is a very minimal commitment.”

The key to the potential benefits of an SEIS program lies in the hands of an informed citizenry. By subjecting formerly invisible information to public scrutiny, Sarokin believes the SEIS will encourage public involvement and corporate accountability. Even corporations that fail to submit their SEIS or omit unflattering information will suffer from the negative publicity of an

## MEDIA BEAT

By Pat Aufderheide

### Sky-high ads

Ready to hunt for the McDonald's ad the next time you gaze at the heavens? If not, there's good news in proposed legislation that would prohibit companies from carrying out plans to construct billboards in space. Amateur astronomers, the Washington-based Center for the Study of Commercialism and several legislators have joined together in a proposal to outlaw space-based ads from being launched in the United States—and to ban imports of any product advertised in space by any other nation.

### TV violence

When TV industry executives met in Los Angeles on August 2 to discuss TV violence and its social effects, they faced a little real-life aggression as well—in the form of political arm-twisting. As experts cited decades of research showing that TV violence leads to negative behavior and TV execs praised the social value of their industry, Sen. Paul Simon (D-IL) once again played his familiar good cop/bad cop role. Shape up, he basically told the industry, or my colleagues will do it for you—without my tender regard for the First Amendment. The day after the meeting, two congressmen introduced bills aimed at limiting violence on television.

### Better than a bake sale?

Channel One—Chris Whittle's 12-minute in-school newscast with commercials—has inspired yet another project aimed at the captive market of schoolkids. The new venture, Kidnews, is backed by



Hasbro, Hershey and Quaker Oats. It gives schools a six-times-a-year public-affairs videotape, as well as wall posters and worksheets on topical issues—discreetly punctuated with ads. Then there's Kidnews' all-day-long rock radio—with commercials, of course. (Highest-priced ads are for lunch hour.) Schools get half the ad revenue.

### By the way...

Watch for ads celebrating cable TV, as the recently re-regulated industry launches a \$5 million campaign to improve its image rather than its service. ... New York's public TV station WNET—located in the nation's center of independent, politically and ethnically diverse film and video-making—has just killed its 15-year-old program Independent Focus. The show was a rare example both of alternative voices and of local production. ... *Adbusters: Journal of the Mental Environment* (Media Foundation, 1243 W. 7th Ave., Vancouver, BC, V6H 1B7 Canada, 604-736-9401) continues its high-spirited celebration of "culture jamming," a.k.a. irritating the advertisers. Among other political pranks, the publication is urging readers of 12 magazines that take cigarette ads to send back postage-paid business reply cards with "stop advertising cigarettes" written on them. ... *Get a Life!*—a comic book starring teenager Billy Bored as he is sucked into a television set and taken on a tour of TV's adland (including Channel One)—is available from Citizens for Media Literacy (34 Wall St., #407, Asheville, NC 28801, 704-255-0182). © 1993 Pat Aufderheide

apparent cover-up.

Sarokin admits that corporate opposition to an SEIS proposal would not be surprising. But he says: "It's just information ... they're just being required to state what happens in the routine course of business. It's such a legitimate and reasonable thing to ask."

—Aushra Abouzejd

*David Sarokin is currently collecting comments and suggestions on the SEIS proposal and would be interested in input from In These Times readers. He can be reached for more information at (202) 363-5856, or by writing 3734 Appleton Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20016.*

## TIME FOR ACTION

### Auto Workers executive urges "radical" effort on legislation

Too long on the defensive, the labor movement must contemplate "doing what some would consider radical" to win legislation preventing employers from hiring permanent replacements for strikers.

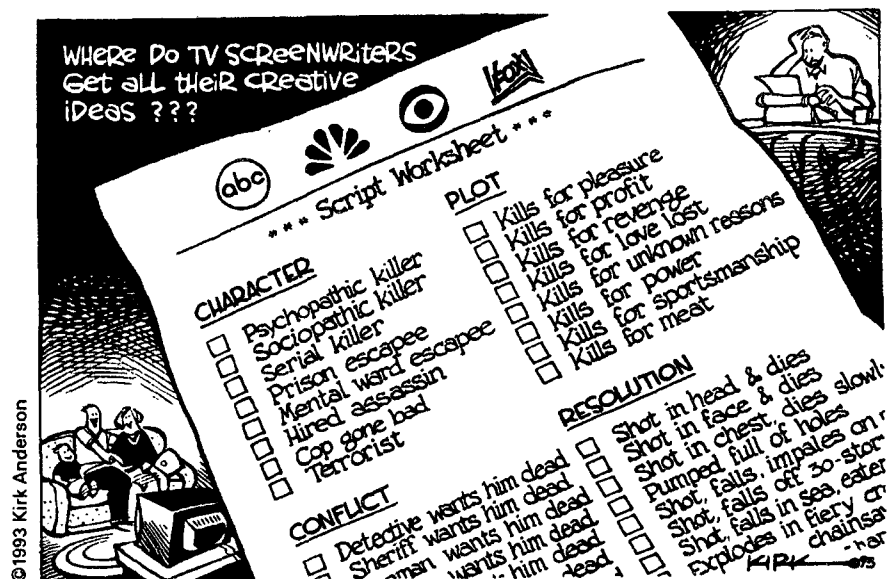
That's the argument United Auto Workers Secretary-Treasurer Bill Casstevens recently made in a letter to leaders of the AFL-CIO and affiliated unions.

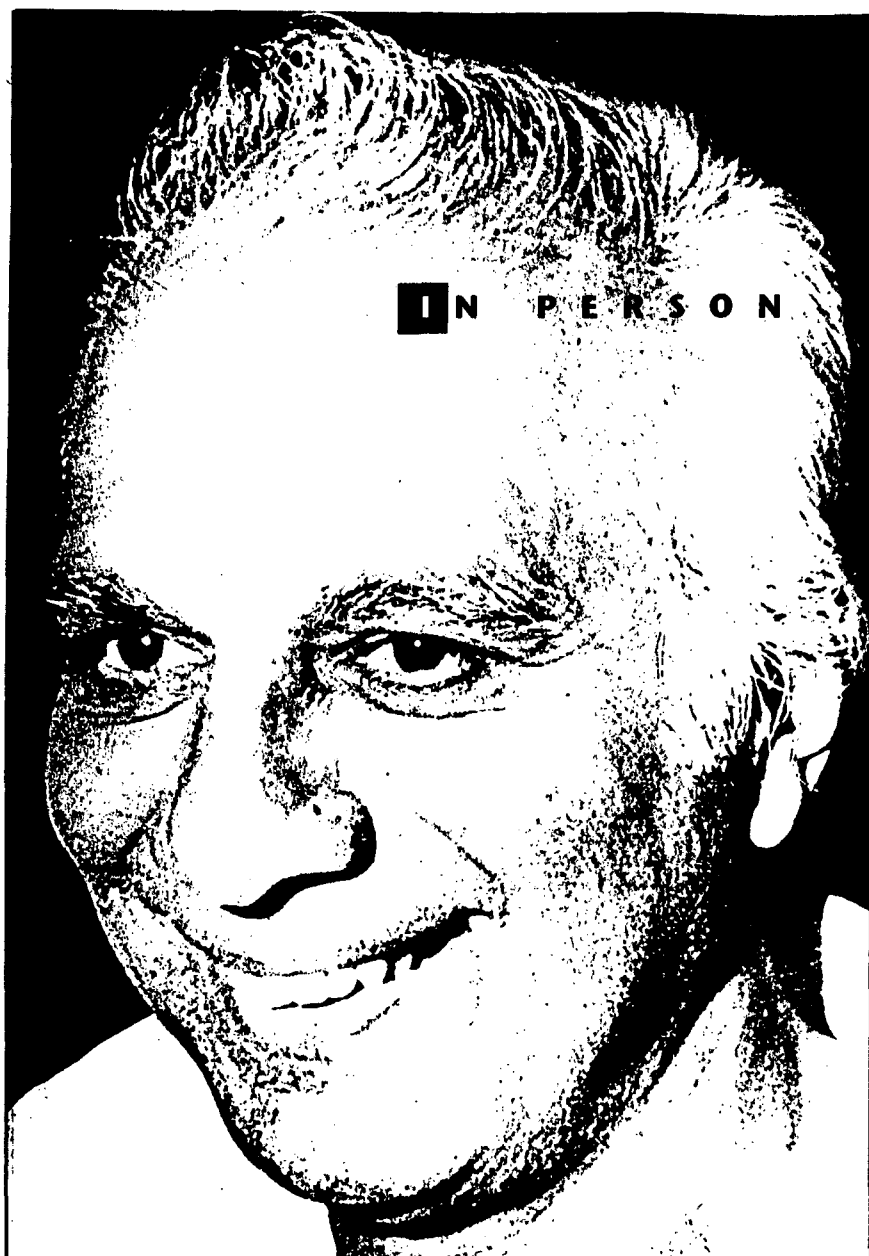
The legislation has passed the House and now goes to the Senate. Casstevens, who is not known for radicalism, argued that Senate supporters of the proposal should force any filibuster that develops to run round-the-clock until there's a vote.

If that doesn't succeed, unions should get supporters to attach the proposal to every other available piece of legislation. If that fails, Casstevens wrote, labor should tell Senate opponents that it will "ask all people who believe in fairness and the democratic process to take to the streets in support of fairness and democracy, and remain there until it's achieved."

There's no indication yet that the majority of labor leaders are contemplating such a mobilization of members and supporters. But Casstevens is right in warning that defeat on this bill will lead even more people to conclude that "the labor movement has lost its clout and is no longer needed."

—David Moberg





**I N P E R S O N**

## POPULIST PRESIDENT

*Cheddi Jagan charts a new course for Guyana*

ly elected. Thirty years have passed since the last time he was, as the *New York Daily News* gloatingly put it, "butchered out of power." Cheddi Jagan may not be angry anymore, but his abruptness makes it obvious that he has little respect for the U.S. or for American journalists.

Guyana's most recent election, on Oct. 9, 1992, was not another force-and-fraud mockery. Jagan attributes that only minimally to attitude changes at the U.S. State Department. He gives most of the credit to former President Jimmy Carter, who headed the international monitoring team. Carter made several commonsense decisions that saved the election from being aborted, and it was only Carter's personal courage in standing up to and then calming

Guyana's new president is 75 years old, his white hair wispy, his impatience apparent. Britain, with help from the United States, has thrice removed him from leadership positions to which he has been fairly

**ETC.**

By Miles Harvey

## A flood of idiocy

One last reason to be glad that Dan Quayle is no longer in office: the great Mississippi River flood of 1993.

The former vice president, of course, bears no direct responsibility for what happened on the Mississippi (though don't ask him to spell it). He is, however, a leading proponent of an out-dated ecological approach that is responsible for much of the flood devastation.

One year ago, as head of the Council on Competitiveness, Quayle was making a last-ditch push to have federal regulations for wetlands changed. In an effort to free up more land for developers, Quayle attempted to exclude from federal protection wetlands that are covered with water only during some seasons. Essentially, under Quayle's plan—which is currently in limbo—only those wetlands that are always "wet" would be protected. Scientists and environmentalists objected.

"A functional wetland ... is one in which some patches are indeed wet all year long, but in which other connected patches are wet only part of the year and some patches aren't wet at all in some years," University of Missouri naturalist Leigh W. Fredrickson told *Science* magazine. Essentially, Fredrickson was reflecting a relatively new "flux of nature" view of the environment, "in which an ecosystem is seen as a mosaic of variegated pieces that change character over time," explains Joseph Alper in *Science*.



Quayle, on the other hand, was pushing an old-fashioned scientific view that ecosystems are static. In this view, individual parts of the ecosystem can be singled out and controlled, without affecting other parts. This is the kind of logic that has long driven the federal government's approach to the Mississippi. Washington has spent billions of dollars over the last 70 years building dams, levees, dikes, retaining walls and locks.

Flooding on the Mississippi this summer, of course, proved Quayle wrong and the ecologists right. As William Booth explains in the *Washington Post*: "Because of farming and levee-building, the Midwest has lost most of its wetlands, which could have been used to store flood waters. Illinois has lost 85 percent of its wetlands; Missouri, 87 percent; Iowa, 89 percent. ... [S]cientists explain that the Mississippi and its tributaries were designed by nature to flood. But because levees constrict the rivers, the water is now kept away from the lowlands along its banks. Messing with the Mississippi comes at a price."

Dan Quayle's wetlands proposal would mess with a lot of other areas. It could exempt up to 50 million acres of wetlands from federal protection, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA has yet to act on the Quayle plan. It is waiting for a National Academy of Science report on wetlands delineation, ordered by Congress in response to the Quayle proposal. That report is due to be completed by the fall of 1994.

down a mob of opposition rioters that kept the polling in the Guyana capital of Georgetown from being closed. Consequently, South America's only English-speaking nation had its day of democracy. The voters handed Jagan and his Progressive People's Party what they had tried to give him 30 years earlier: the chance to lead an independent Guyana.

Jagan's wife, Chicago native Janet Rosenberg—a niece of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg—summarized what the Progressive People's Party stands for. "The first 20 years we were a populist party," she said. "In 1970, we decided to call ourselves Marxist, and in the '80s we went back to calling ourselves populist. But our focus has always been the same: democracy and a higher standard of living for the people. Basically we just want to improve the lot of the people."

The word "democracy" runs like a drumbeat through the president's answers to questions. When asked how he'll get the country back on track, Jagan replies, "There can be no development without democracy. We will put into place elected government at all levels—municipal, regional, national."

But saying that democracy would solve Guyana's massive economic problems seems as airy as saying that love is the solution to war.

Pressed further, Jagan elaborates: "We will involve people at all levels and take advantage of their creativity, setting up citizens' committees in every community, getting farmers and workers involved in running their own set-up. For example, two years ago it was decided to close two sugar mills and withdraw 12,000 acres from sugar production to grow other crops. But employees were not even consulted. We want to involve workers in decision-making."

Jagan will not repeat the mistakes of the former Soviet Union. "What stifled the Soviet economy was its bureaucratic, command-type government. That's what we had here. Every level of government was controlled by the ruling party—by fraud. Now we have an elected, democratic administration at the national level, but we will be going beyond that. People must not vote just every few years. They must be involved every day in the affairs of the country, involved in democratic citizens' committees where they will organize projects, cleaning up and policing their community."

Jagan addresses the subject of money dismissively. "There's a lot of money available for rebuilding infrastructure at a local level, from both government and non-government agencies," he says. In Jagan's view the resources are there, always have been there. The things missing were grass-roots organizations powerful enough to ensure that the existing resources were used to meet the needs of ordinary people.

Since graduating from Northwestern University's dental school in 1942, Jagan has spent 49 years doing grass-roots organizing in Guyana. Now that he is president, he says, rather wearily, he will simply continue trying to get people involved in organizations that are structured to give them the collective power to shape the political, economic and social forces that affect their lives.

With dogged persistence, Jagan plods on. His popularity and party support are now stronger than when he was driven from power. This presidential victory, he says, is just one more step in the struggle. He and Janet, who at 72 remains a full and active partner in their political life, both insist that grass-roots democracy works, and that when put into practice it will enhance the social and economic well-being of the people who practice it.

President Jagan concludes his interview with obvious relief. Perhaps he has grown tired of trying to explain the advantages of grass-roots democracy to people from a country where it is rarely practiced, let alone seen as a route to economic prosperity.

—Rosa Jordan

## THE FIRST STONE

# MARCH ON MAIN STREET

By Joel Bleifuss

Three decades ago this month, Martin Luther King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech to 250,000 people who had participated in the March on Washington. "Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy," he declared from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

But despite some legislative accomplishments in the past 30 years, those promises are still far from fulfilled, and King's dream remains unrealized.

A "30th Anniversary Mobilization" will be held on August 28 to commemorate the March on Washington.

Another march? Where's the movement? When I heard about the event, I wondered how effective such a march could be. Are there better ways to seek King's dream than by spending another day strolling down Pennsylvania Avenue? I put my questions to Paul Wellstone, Minnesota's Democratic senator.

Wellstone was elected to the Senate in 1990 through a grass-roots political campaign. He quickly made his voice heard in Washington by bucking public opinion and speaking out against the Gulf War.

In the spring of 1992, Wellstone and his supporters founded a statewide organization to promote progressive politics throughout the state. Known as the Wellstone Alliance, the organization was in part conceived to help rebuild the state's Democratic Farmer Labor Party into a

citizen-based organization. As Wellstone explained to me last fall, "In this country parties have atrophied. We have to go back to labor-intensive politics and build a party that is a real party." (see "The First Stone," Nov. 11, 1992.)

More recently he has been one of the most vocal supporters on Capitol Hill for a single-payer health care system.

I interviewed Wellstone on the last day of this congressional session. The veteran community organizer and former political science professor had much to say.

**Do you think this march will do more than raise spirits and help those attending feel good?**

First, there has to be a significant showing of people around the country for the march to become effective. Second, everything depends on the follow-up. The problem with marches and demonstrations is always that when the smoke clears not a lot has changed, so then the organizing work has to be done to really push the change.

There is a disconnection right now between a lot of the issues in our communities and politics in Washington. And the way to make the connection is to start applying the tactics of community organizing to politics in Washington. I've always thought: Why not go beyond these marches and organize "accountability sessions" back in the states and home districts? Washington, D.C., is such an expensive airplane trip away, but Democratic and Republican lawmakers always go home.

For example, take health care, which is a fundamental economic-justice issue. If this fall, on the same Saturday at noon in every congressional district, in every state, every representative and senator was called home, it would be a huge story. It would be covered locally and nationally, and, more importantly, people would hear about it and read about it and see it. You would provoke hopes and aspirations in people that they have a real chance of making a difference and it would involve a lot more people.

**Have you talked to people involved in health care about this?**

This is something we really want to do in the single-payer coalition. It is something we will do.

These meetings could happen in the fall, when the president announces his plan and it goes to the Congress. The focus of the country will be on health care. You could call these local meetings something other than "accountability sessions," which is an expression from community organizing. But the nice thing about saying, "Let's organize a health



care-democracy day," is that it is something people are comfortable with.

What is it going to be—democracy for the few, or democracy for the many? And who is going to decide? Meeting with their elected representatives is one of the ways people are taught that they can be politically active. So we take advantage of that, and we really broaden our base. A lot of Ross Perot supporters will come out. And you will find that a lot of other people will come out because health care is so compelling. And then you come into that meeting with a set of demands and put the pressure on.

That's what will move people here in Washington, including the president. I would say the same thing about education or a children's agenda or whether there is going to be an urban agenda. We need to start thinking much more about this kind of national organizing. It's appreciative of and sensitive to how most people are. They are comfortable with it, and because of that it is a good way to organize.

We have to start doing more of that—not as a substitute for a march on Washington that celebrates an important event in history, but as follow-up.

Last year you established the Wellstone Alliance. What opportunities does the alliance offer citizens who are not politically involved?

The alliance is a merger of community organizing and electoral politics. It is an effort to follow up on the election of 1990 and make sure that the Senate victory was a victory for all the people in the campaign who started thinking of themselves as leaders and who started thinking about running for school board or county commissioner or mayor or city council. The alliance is essentially an effort to organize around Minnesota, to thrust forward a lot of new women and men for local offices, and then to provide them with help on the nuts and bolts of campaigning.

The alliance relies on the methodology of house meetings, which is a technique out of community organizing, instead of people being asked to get involved in a political campaign every two or four years. In our society there is no opportunity for authentic political discussion or conversation, where people can figure out what they care about and how they can work together. So it is a way to build political leadership. Organizing around these house meetings has worked well because it is right there where people live. And we have had some good success.

What victories has the alliance had?

We have had success winning elec-

tions and in other ways. In 1992, there was a huge upset victory in Minnesota's 2nd Congressional District, which interestingly enough was Vin Weber's district. He is a very conservative Republican. This was in the southwest rural part of the state, which is dear to my heart because a lot of my organizing was in rural agricultural communities. The alliance was given a tremendous amount of credit for the election of David Minge to the 2nd Congressional District.

I sure don't want to take away from what David Minge did, but we were able to come in at a critical time with field operations. That is our genius. We're very labor-intensive, and we're good at figuring out where you need to get the votes, how to set up a field operation, how to schedule your time and how to turn people out.

In the 1992 state legislative races, there were maybe 10 or 12 people who ran for the legislature who were involved in the Senate race. About half of them lost. But so what? They stepped forward and learned a lot. And about half a dozen, most of them women, won.

Another place that we have had success is with a board that is active statewide. We do coalition-building and have been involved in a lot of lobbying in the state legislature on key issues. The alliance was centrally involved in a campaign for a state law forbidding discrimination by sexual orientation. We won that in the legislature earlier this year.

## THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

by Peter Hannan





**U.S. Senator  
Paul Wellstone**

We have also been successful at small donor fund-raising. I don't take money over \$100 per person, per year, and I haven't taken any political action committee monies since I paid off the debt after the '90 election. We have been able to raise money in creative, grass-roots ways. I don't know what I will do in the next election cycle. I hope there will be major campaign finance reform, but I don't know if I will be able to continue to do it this way for the '96 election.

**Do you know of other states where these strategies are being adopted? Is that a particular level that you consider the best place to start?**

I don't know of anything quite like the alliance. Some senators have expressed an interest in doing something similar.

I think it's best to do such organizing at the state level. You build your political leadership, and you merge your program with a constituency to fight for that program—through both grass-roots organizing and electoral politics. All of these ingredients need to fit together.

I look at Minnesota as a place I've lived and built up a lot of trust among people. And I have a lot of people whom I believe in and have learned from in different communities. So you try to do that at the state level and that becomes a pyramid whereby you affect national politics.

**Does it even make sense to talk about a national orga-**

**nization now? Or is more work needed in various locales?**

The state and local level is the way to do it. It's hard to have a base otherwise. We've tried to get down to a pretty local level. What happens at these school board elections is very important.

I'd like the alliance to get to the point—and we're not there yet—that if a woman in rural Minnesota came to us and said, "I'd like to run for the school board. I look at some of the people getting elected these days and it makes me realize that we better get organized out there," we could help her. We could say, "Look, here are 20 people we know in your community who would be willing to make phone calls, and here are about 50 people who would have lawn signs, and we'd be more than willing to come out and go through how you identify people and turn people out to vote."

**Since you have been a U.S. senator, have your views changed about what needs to be done or what can be done?**

Since I have been in the U.S. Senate I have become a bigger believer in the importance of grass-roots politics. Here's a perfect example of how grass-roots politics could work as it is supposed to. When I first came here, I was involved in an effort to filibuster the proposal for oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. It started out with two people, myself and Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-CT), and we don't always agree on issues.

We were both freshmen. And some of the people in the Senate literally laughed at us. But then we organized in the Senate and we developed about eight or 10 senators who were very committed to the issue. But the key thing was that before the cloture vote on the filibuster took place, each one of those senators who were key votes had a face-to-face meeting with groups of people back in their states. It made a huge difference, more than I ever imagined. And that is why we won.

And I hear from people in Congress that this happens all the time on the health care issue. Pat Moynihan, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, said to me a couple months ago, "When [the budget debate] is over, we're going to have to sit down and talk about single-payer."

He didn't say he was going to be committed to it. But his point was: "I was on some radio show and all I heard was single-payer, single-payer, single-payer." So you see how it can make a difference. Albeit that you are always organizing against a lot of power.

**What strategy should progressive Democrats pursue vis-à-vis the Clinton administration?**

I don't think we need a strategy of total opposition politics because sometimes support should be given—for example, on "motor voter" registration and on some strong pro-choice positions, and for that matter on this budget bill. I've been looking at the income-distribution effects of the tax increases and they are really stunning—and all in the right



direction. This is really the case where the top 1 percent will be paying their fair share. In my opinion, the legislation could have been better, but it was progressive.

So our posture should be to give support where support can be given, but to understand that there has to be tremendous external pressure on Washington. If I could snap my fingers and will history in the making, it would be that President Clinton would begin to interact with a strong grassroots politics that would be the motive power for his moving forward on a progressive agenda—much in the same way that John Kennedy began to interact with the civil rights movement. Kennedy came in with “centrist” politics, but before he was tragically assassinated, he was moving toward embracing the civil rights movement. I think Clinton needs the same kind of push.

**Is this kind of push possible with more and more people feeling disconnected from the political process?**

There is a lot of disengagement and a lot of disillusionment and a lot of the politics of anger. If Michael Harrington were alive, I’m sure he’d say, as he did: “People are going to the left, people are going to the right and going to the center—and all at the same time.”

But people are the stuff you work with. The politics of anger has created a void and Ross Perot has been filling part of that vacuum. But I don’t see any reason in the world that people who feel strongly about progressive change can’t be out there organizing the people right now.

The politics of anger—and that is exactly what it is—has

become a central dynamic in American politics. And that politics of anger could translate into a citizenry that is more disengaged or more disillusioned, with a kind of across-the-board denigration and bashing of all public servants and all people in public service. There is a reactionary underpinning to this that will only lead to a further decline of democracy, and some people are really fanning the flames of discontent in that direction. That is one scenario.

The other scenario is that the politics of anger translates into a more engaged and energized and empowered citizenry that essentially says: “We’re going to hold you people accountable. And, by the way, we can run for office or we can run people for office. We’re setting higher standards—and we no longer want to be cut out of the loop or ripped off.”

I find a lot of that in Minnesota, and not necessarily from people who are “activists.” And I have found that encouraging. This spirit would lead to an expansion of democracy, not a decline of democracy. Those are the two directions that we could go in. We’ve got to make sure it is the expansion of democracy.

**You seem pretty upbeat about things.**

I’ll go to my grave believing I can change the world. That is the basis of my politics. You can’t do the work without believing that. In the absence of this kind of effort, such a change won’t take place, so I push for it very hard.

In the last analysis, it is not observations or predictions that matter, it’s what we do. And now there is much greater potential for change than there has been for many years. ◀

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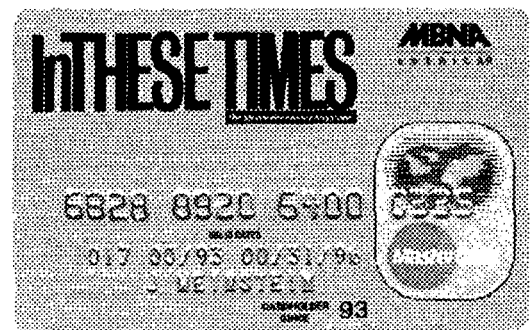
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**B L A C K A M E R I C A**

# Fear of a gay planet

**T**

he nation's largest African-American parade has provided the latest venue for the intensifying struggle between reactionary forces of black social conservatism and gay America.

*Facing the entrenched homophobia of African-American popular culture, black gay activists are fighting for their civil rights.*

By Salim Muwakkil  
CHICAGO

For the first time in the 64-year history of the Bud Billiken parade, an organized homosexual group, under the banner of the Ad Hoc Committee of Proud Black Lesbians and Gays, has been allowed to march in the legendary procession. Their inclusion was accompanied by a blizzard of opposition, but it appears the "gay moment" finally has come to Chicago's South Side, and, by extension, to the city's black community.

More significantly, the Billiken controversy illustrates a growing trend: black gays are seeking direct confrontations with the deeply entrenched forces of homophobia in the African-

American community.

Taking a cue from the gay Irish-American group that petitioned—albeit unsuccessfully—the Ancient Order of Hibernians to admit them into New York City's St. Patrick's Day parade, the Chicago group targeted an extremely popular ethnic celebration to make their point. And since the Billiken parade, held every August, honors a mythical character who protects minority children from the hazards of racist bigotry, the black gay group thought it would offer a good opportunity to make the case that all bigotries are linked. "We're marching because we want to increase the visibility of black lesbians and gays and especially let the young see that we contribute to the community and that we're their neighbors, their brothers and their sisters," says organizer Lisa Pickens.

Pomo Afro Homos, a celebrated San Francisco-based theater group, is trying to make the same point in another venue.

Although the group has won international plaudits, Pomo Afro Homos—short for Postmodern African-American Homosexuals—has been excluded from the National Black Theater Festival in Winston-Salem, N.C., scheduled for this month. The group's artistic director, Brian Freeman, is convinced Pomo Afro Homos were excluded because of their open homosexuality. "From day one, black people learn that discrimination is going to be a constant in our lives, but it is very painful when you are oppressed by other black people," Freeman says.

Donald Suggs, the black public affairs director of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, is engaged in an increasingly bitter struggle to reduce the acceptance of homophobic expressions in black popular culture. "Everybody wants to talk about artistic freedom," Suggs told *Spin* magazine, "but nobody wants to talk about artistic responsibility."

All of these groups, and dozens of others like them, have decided it is time for the African-American community to begin examining its own bigotries. Undoubtedly, their decision was heavily influenced by statistics citing increases in anti-gay violence. In Chicago, for example, the Horizons Community Services Anti-Violence Project has reported that violence against gays was up 20 percent in 1992, and much of that increase was on the city's predominantly black South Side.

Many gay blacks attribute the African-American community's antagonism toward the gay rights movement to the inordinate power of the black clergy. Since the church historically was the only black social institution relatively free of white control, it became the center of most community activity, from politics to partying.

Because of this unique history, many issues important to

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African-Americans are not assessed by a rational reckoning of costs and benefits but are framed instead by the moralistic context of Judeo-Christian scripture or some other doctrinal dogma. This moralistic myopia is exemplified by some black leaders' opposition to clean-needle giveaway programs and by their stand against contraceptive counseling for high school students.

But pulpit moralists are not the only preachers of anti-gay sentiments these days. As Suggs notes, some of the crudest expressions of homophobia are emerging from the secular world of black popular culture. The lyrics of many contemporary rap songs are sprinkled heavily with gay-bashing. Examples abound, but here a few samples of what the world of rap says about gays:

◦ "Them muthafuckas kept trying to lose me, and some f... kept trying to choose me, I stuck the f... and sent him on his way kid, you know why? I don't play that fucking gay shit." (Lench Mob, "Lost In Tha System.")

◦ "But here's a Jimmy joke about yo' mama that you might not like, I heard she was a Frisco dyke." (Snoop Dog on Dr. Dre's "Dre Day.")

◦ "Well I can freak, fly, flow, fuck up a faggot, don't understand their ways and I ain't down with gays." (Brand Nubian, "Punks Jump Up To Get Beat Down.")

The progressive rap group Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy is one of the few rap aggregations to attack gay-bashing in their lyrics. But group leader Michael Franti understands the homophobic dynamic behind much rap. "[Of] the symbolic rites of manhood ... the most important one is hetero-

sexual virility. And the way to say you're the most virile is to say you're the least homosexual or 'soft.' "

Franti is correct, of course, and homophobia has always had an implicit presence in rap music. But in recent years the tone has become harsher, more violent. The soaring popularity of "gangsta" rap, a subgenre that focuses on the predatory culture of life in the underground economy, has helped illuminate some of the reasons for the growth of more virulent strains of homophobia. The gangsta rappers' disdain for softness has become a major component of black street culture circa 1993.

Even female rappers are finding success in mining the macho quotient. A female rap group called Boss has won unprecedented respect from hip-hop aficionados by adopting a hard-core, macho persona. The group's success has helped

Ad Hoc Committee organizers  
Lisa Pickens, Shelton Watson,  
and Karen Hutt

harden the image of other female rappers like M.C. Lyte, Queen Latifah and Nikki D. No doubt about it, in black popular culture, hardness is a virtue.

Moreover, the resurgent black nationalism that characterizes much of the black activist community is also hostile to homosexuality. Black nationalists influenced by Islam generally cite scriptural sources for their anti-gay biases; more secular nationalists offer cultural reasons.

"Homosexuality is a deviation from Afrocentric thought because it makes the person evaluate his own physical needs above the teachings of national consciousness," writes Molefi Kete Asante in his landmark book *Afrocentricity*. Asante, chairman of the African-American Studies department at Temple University in Philadelphia, is considered the intellectual godfather of the contemporary Afrocentric movement.

While Asante advises African-Americans to be "sensitive to the human complexity of the [gay] problem," he nonetheless insists that homosexuality be condemned. Like other nationalists, Asante argues that homosexuality is a product of "European decadence" and that "black gays are often put in front of white or integrated organizations to show the liberalism of the group."

Those arguments fueled much of the opposition to gay



participation in Chicago's Bud Billiken parade. According to many of the opponents, black homosexuals' intrusion into the family-oriented procession is part of a larger conspiracy hatched by white gay activists with an anti-family cultural agenda. And many feel that the African-American community is already being debilitated by the effects of family disintegration. Further attacks on family stability serve a genocidal function, they argue.

"If gays want to practice their decadent lifestyle behind closed doors, in private or in a closet, I say more power to them," says Harold Lucas, a longtime community organizer. "But when they try to invade a sanctum of family entertainment like the Bud Billiken parade—where I take many of my young relatives, anticipating an outing of pleasure and lack of controversy, I assure you I'll do my level best to make sure those gays know they're not welcome. They have to keep that perverted decadence to themselves." Lucas is generally respected by other activists for his progressive positions on issues concerning the black community. But on issues of gay rights, Lucas is aligned with some of the community's most reactionary forces.

This dichotomy has long plagued progressive African-American activists. Concern for gay rights was an extremely divisive issue at the founding of Jesse Jackson's National Rainbow Coalition; pro-gay language in the group's founding charter was strongly opposed by clergymen in the group. Jackson is one of the few black clergymen willing to join forces with the gay rights movement. Benjamin Chavis, the NAACP's new executive director, is another prominent preacher willing to challenge the anti-gay biases that are so pervasive in the black church. In an unprecedented gesture, the NAACP participated in the April gay rights march on Washington.

Homophobia permeates American culture. But for historical reasons, it would seem that African-Americans, more than anyone, should understand that discrimination against one out-group can easily mutate into biases against others on the fringe. Jackson's principled stand and the NAACP's show of solidarity are good portents. "Our tradition, objective and constitution is to hasten the elimination of segregation and discrimination in all walks of life, for all citizens of this country, says NAACP Chairman William Gibson.

For many years, theorists have debated whether homophobia is greater within the African-American community than it is in the community at large.

Cornel West, director of Afro-American Studies at Princeton University, laments the prevalence of black homophobia. He notes the influence of the church and the nationalists, and beneath it all he discerns a larger cultural crisis that presents black men with limited stylistic options of self-image and resistance. And that rings true.

African-American men historically have been denied access to the patriarchal perquisites of men in the dominant culture—and those few they have claimed have been based on physical demonstrations of strength or virility. Thus machismo has always been a strong component of the black

masculine mystique.

"Gay black men who reject the black machismo identity are marginalized in white America and penalized in black America for doing so. In their efforts to be themselves, they are told they are not really "black men," not machismo-identified, soft," says West.

On the other hand, activist Conrad Worrill contends that the African-American community is less intolerant of deviance than is the mainstream culture. Worrill, who is chairman of the National Black United Front, the country's largest secular black nationalist group, says, "People who say that African-Americans are more homophobic—and that's a word invented by the organized gay and lesbian community—don't understand our cultural context. We are extremely tolerant of diverse lifestyles, as long as these diverse interests don't become obstacles to the black agenda. Unfortunately, many black gays have been pulled into the agenda of white gays and lesbians."

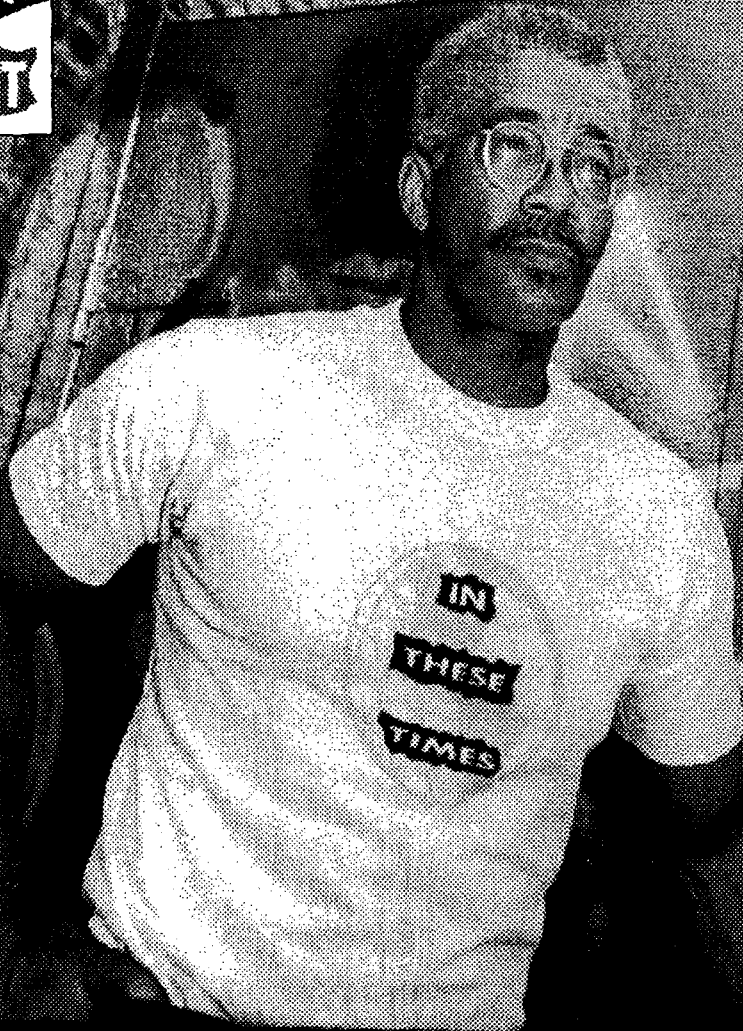
These issues have been pushed to the forefront by Bill Clinton's attempts to lift the ban on gays in the military. For black Americans, for whom the military has become a vital alternative to the post-industrial devastation of too many of their communities, the fight over gays in the military has a particular relevance. Gen. Colin Powell, the first black chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the nation's history, was strongly opposed to plans to lift the gay ban—despite the similarities between racial segregation in the military and the current gay ban.

"Black people are in a crisis," says social critic and author bell hooks. "And when people are in a crisis and they want solutions, they fall back on scapegoating and narrowly defined traditional values." This is the primary reason why many African-Americans reject the notion that the struggle for gay rights is akin to their fight for civil rights.

The African-American community's general denial of homophobia has led to some intriguing ironies. For example, many black organizers have criticized gay leaders for equating their April 25 march on Washington with the massive march for civil rights in August 1963. (See stories on pages 19 and 40.) That march is remembered as the event that catapulted Martin Luther King into national prominence with his "I Have a Dream" speech. But the 1963 event was actually conceived and organized by Bayard Rustin, a gay man. He was denied credit and visibility precisely *because* he was a gay man.

The construction of black masculinity as hard, aggressive, machismo-identified and *cold*—check the number of rappers with the moniker "Ice"—in opposition to the "softness" of homosexuality seems likely to have exacerbated the problem of black-on-black violence. It's no mystery why homicide is the leading cause of death among young black men when major conflicts are too often provoked by minor insults to what has become a perverse sense of manhood. As the murder rate rises, so do the gauges of homophobia. African-Americans must begin asking if there's a connection. ◀

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Photo by David Schulz



## THE ECONOMY

# Low budget

**A**t the heart of Bill Clinton's presidential campaign was the promise to use the power of government to halt the country's economic decline. Clinton charged that the Bush administration "wasted billions and reduced our investments in education and jobs." He promised "job-creating investment" while simultaneously reducing the deficit. "My national economic strategy," Clinton declared in June 1992, "puts people first by investing more than \$50 billion each year for the next four years. ... These investments will create millions of high-wage jobs and help America compete in the global economy."

*Clinton's budget victory is a defeat for the American economy, and a betrayal of his campaign promises.*

By John B. Judis  
WASHINGTON D.C.

It was a bold promise, and one that, if kept, would have benefited the American economy. But Clinton's fiscal year 1994 budget, passed by Congress this month, amounts to a stark

betrayal of this commitment. Compared to Bush's 1993 budget, it doesn't increase, but actually reduces, the amount of public investment. It cuts or eliminates entirely funding for new technology and education. The only thing good that can be said about it is that the Republican alternative was just as bad.

Increasing public investment is important for two reasons. In the short run, it helps create jobs—whether in highway construction or software design—to supplement those created by the private sector. Since 1929, the U.S. has not been able to keep unemployment down without substantial public job creation—and the economy presently remains mired in a slump.

In the long run, targeted public investment is also needed to replace the military-industrial complex as a driving force in the American economy. Since 1940, military spending has not just provided jobs; it has also spurred the development of the most important industries, including aircraft and computers. Now, as military spending steadily diminishes—by \$185 billion over the next four years—the U.S. must either replace it with another kind

of public spending or risk a return to the '30s.

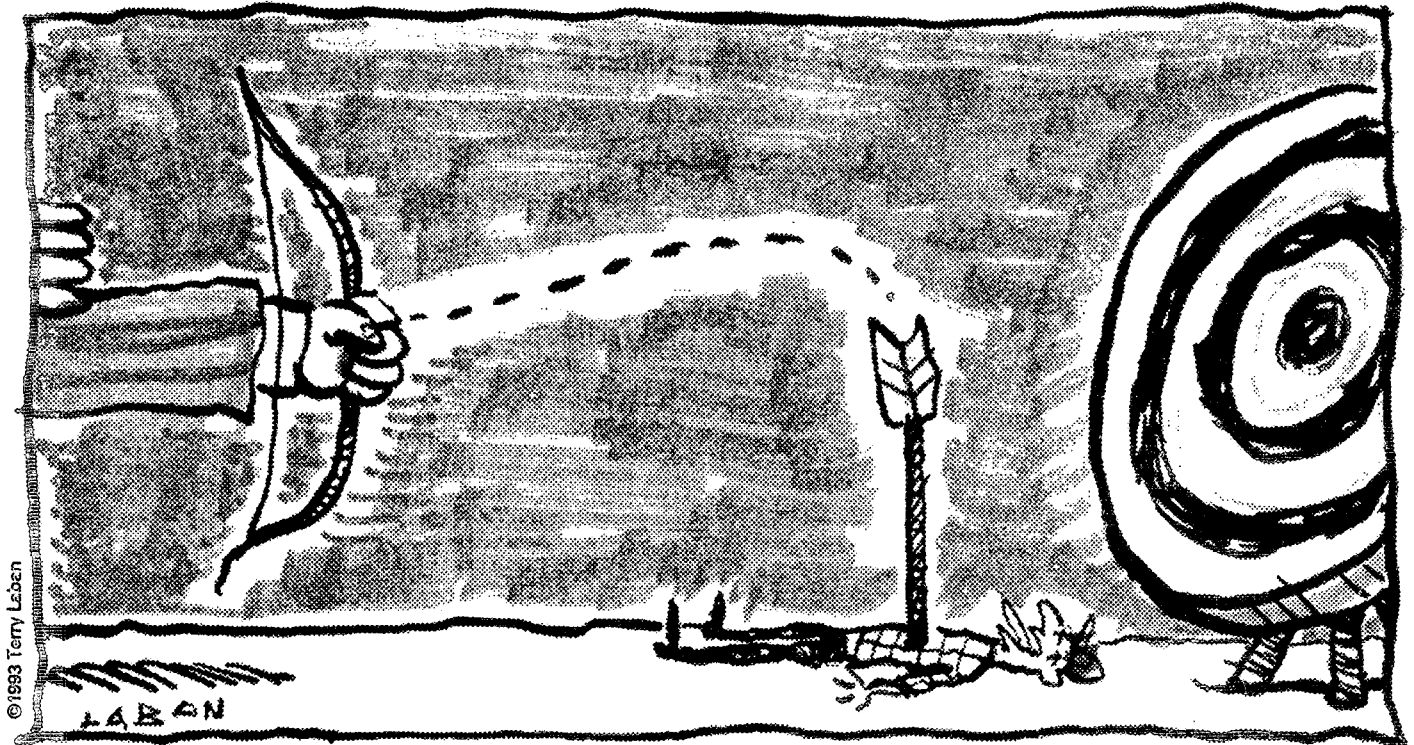
During the campaign, Clinton and Vice President Al Gore hinted at the desirability of a new social-environmental-industrial complex, based on such innovations as high-speed rail, solar power and biotechnology, to replace the military as a catalyst for development.

But in negotiations with Democrats in Congress, the administration totally abandoned this new vision of public investment as well as new spending on worker education and training. From the standpoint of public investment, the Clinton budget is certainly the most regressive since Reagan's budgets of the early '80s—and perhaps the most backward since those of the '20s.

The new Clinton budget sets overall limits for spending and taxes, but does not yet assign money to individual projects. According to a forthcoming study by Todd Schafer of the Economic Policy Institute, this budget allocates less money to total public investment—in physical capital, education and training, and research and development—than the Bush budget of 1993. The Clinton budget will result in a 1 to 2 percent decline from the 1993 investment level. By contrast, the last Bush budget increased public investment spending 9.9 percent.

Perhaps most significant of all, public investment will decline as a percentage of gross domestic product and of federal outlays. That means that Clinton has indeed reversed past priorities—but in a way that is exactly the opposite of what he promised. Instead of shifting spending from unproductive consumption to productive investment, he has done the reverse.





Congress won't finally decide on specific spending items until the fall, but the House Appropriations Committee has already presented its recommendations. Negotiated with the Clinton administration, they reflect the same disturbing indifference to the proposals that Clinton trumpeted during the campaign.

Clinton's February budget requested a paltry appropriation of \$35 million for developing high-speed railroads—already a repudiation of his campaign promises. The House Appropriations Committee recommends no spending whatsoever.

During the campaign, Clinton and Labor Secretary Robert Reich extolled the virtues of job training. But as president, Clinton has shown less commitment to this issue than did Bush. In 1993, the Bush administration budget allocated more than \$1 billion for adult job training. The Democratic House has recommended \$988 million for 1994. The House has also cut youth job training from 1993 by \$38 million.

Even Gore's favorite programs have been axed. In a handout to the press, the administration boasted about reducing funding for new environmental technologies—cutting out \$6.3 billion over five years in funding for wastewater treatment.

In Clinton's initial plan, which he unveiled on February 17, he backloaded many of the programs—postponing spending until the last two years of his term. But Clinton has prevented himself from significantly increasing spending on public investment in the short term. He agreed to a total cap on discretionary social spending and to a foolish proposal by Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-AZ) to divert any new tax revenues into deficit reduction rather than into new spending programs. The fate of

public investment under Clinton is sealed.

Clinton loyalists—and they are a dying breed—argue that the administration had no choice because of the pressures of deficit reduction. But as the president's February program demonstrated, it was possible to combine deficit reduction and new public investment—if you adopted new energy taxes to fund the investment. But through political ineptitude and weakness, Clinton frittered away the substantial public support his program first enjoyed.

Loyalists also argue that the program should be supported because of the benefits it bestows upon the poor, including a program for enterprise zones and for an increase in the earned-income tax credit. But these programs depend for their success upon a thriving economy. If businesses are not ready to invest in Schenectady, they will hardly be willing to rush off to the South Bronx. At best, these measures will mean that the U.S. will decline more gracefully.

Over the next decades, the country's ability to compete and prosper in the world economy will depend on our ability to mesh public and private power—to use government to shape economic change in a way that benefits Americans. Central to this effort is the wise use of public investment.

Clinton, of course, knew this. So did many of his campaign advisers who became administration officials, including Reich, Ira Magaziner and Laura Tyson. But as president, Clinton has proved singularly unable to act on his own understanding. On one of the most important issues he will face, Clinton has proved himself no better than his predecessor.

*Todd Schafer's forthcoming briefing paper on the budget is available from the Economic Policy Institute, 1730 Rhode Island Ave. NW, Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

# L A B O R

# High-performance anxiety

**T**

he Clinton administration is gambling that promoting the "high-performance workplace" will rejuvenate a sagging economy, reduce trade deficits and create more and better-paying jobs.

*Will the future of the workplace be lean and mean, or just plain mean?*

By David Moberg  
CHICAGO

Bowing to conservatives in Congress, the White House has abandoned both a short-run stimulus package and a long-term plan to significantly increase public investment, thus eliminating the most promising growth strategies. (See story on page 22.) Deficit-cutting won't generate jobs, and more jobs are likely to be lost to capital flight from the North American Free Trade Agreement than will be created through increased trade. So the Clintonites now must hope that low-cost tinkering with the private economy will tune up the nation's economic engine.

Reforming work and

corporate decision-making is a worthy project. Besides, who could be against "high performance" anything? Yet the nostrums discussed at a July conference held by the Labor and Commerce Departments in Chicago represent a curious mishmash of some obviously good ideas and some not-so-obviously questionable ones. The conference was an uncritical call to arms: "Workers and managers of the country unite! You have nothing to lose. Everyone wins."

In theory, the management of a high-performance workplace opens its books to employees, who then make many decisions traditionally left to their bosses. Some of the workers' pay may be based on profit-sharing. They often work in teams that cut across different departments and specializations. Workers are continually trained in a wide range of skills, and they are committed to continual innovation and service to customers' needs to stay ahead of the competition. Furthermore, yesterday's barking foreman becomes today's helpful "mentor." And when times are tough, management asks employees for their help

rather than axing them to reduce costs.

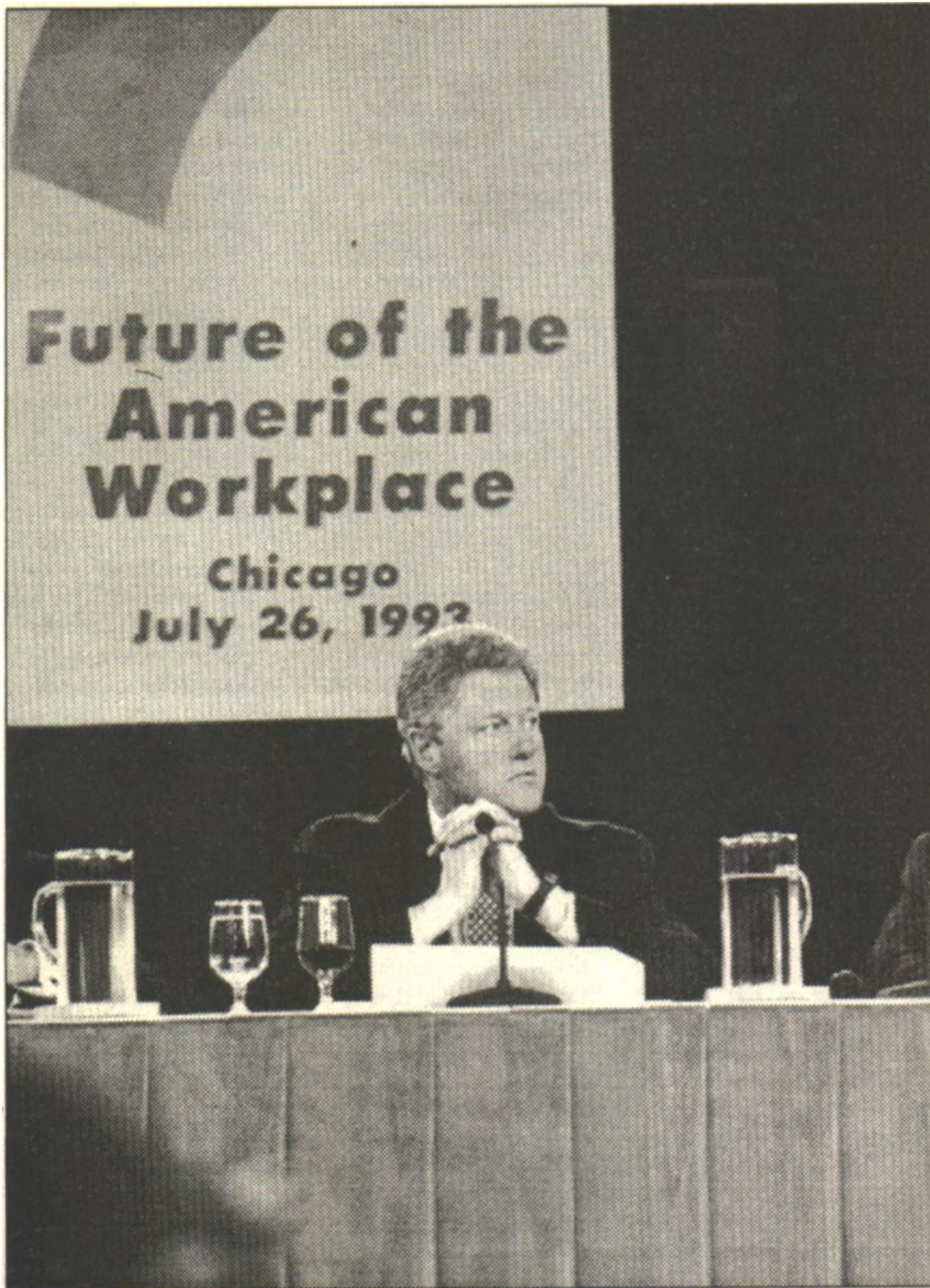
All this sounds pretty good compared to a bureaucratic, top-down enterprise that treats workers as overpaid dummies. But such descriptions gloss over tough questions. What happens when there's a conflict between what's good for workers and corporate profits? (Can't happen, advocates say.) Does boosting corporate performance necessarily improve social well-being? For all the vague talk about an "empowered" workforce, what rights do workers unequivocally possess?

In real life, there have been dramatic gains—for workers and companies—through work reform, but there have been many failures. There are also very different models of the high-performance workplace—from authoritarian Japanese-style auto production to the Swedish democratic workplace.

The Labor Department, in a study released at the conference, argued that despite mixed results, research shows that employee involvement, pay linked to performance (such as profit-sharing) and worker training all boost productivity and company profitability. The more comprehensive and systematic the changes, the study concluded, the more likely there will be positive results. Four-fifths of big U.S. employers claim to use some sort of innovative work practices, but most are superficial, such as the establishment of "quality circles" led by foremen to discuss problems.

At the Chicago conference, businessman Robert Frey testified that he had discovered the advantages of involving rather than attacking his workers. After his 1984 purchase of Cin-Made Corporation, a small, declining paper and cardboard business, he demanded deep pay and benefit cuts.





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or participation—are ambiguous.

Work organization and management styles can make a difference. Yet Daniel Luria, a researcher for the University of Michigan-affiliated Industrial Technology Institute, argues that the productivity of an auto plant is most strongly determined by whether or not it is operating at full capacity. If Clinton wants to create good jobs, and even to encourage the high-performance workplace, he should spur growth through public works and fiscal stimulus.

There is also no guarantee that high-performance workplace techniques will benefit workers—or the nation—even if companies gain. Productivity increases make possible—but don't assure—wage hikes. For example, American workers' wages are constrained partly by the ease with which businesses can move much manufacturing work to low-wage countries, where they can still pursue many high-performance strategies.

Even if workers do gain from increased productivity, they might lose in other ways. Although many workers like the prospect of thinking and taking initiative on the job, current

Relations with the unionized workforce deteriorated and the company nearly went bankrupt before Frey proposed a new arrangement. He would share profits. Workers would largely manage their own work and have a voice in strategic planning with full access to company records. Workers distrusted him but decided to support his strategy—and the company has since bounded back to profitability.

Yet not every venture turns out so well. Often it's hard to determine the effects of changes in the workplace. Features of the high-performance workplace—like teamwork

workplace reform emphasizes competitiveness and productivity, not the humanization and democratization of work that was stressed 20 years ago.

The issue is best illustrated in the debate over "lean production" in the automobile industry, a term coined by MIT researchers James Womack, Daniel T. Jones and Daniel Roos in their 1990 book, *The Machine That Changed the World*. As enthusiasts of lean production, they claim that the production system developed by Toyota is the next stage beyond craft and mass production.



The system is "lean" because it uses less of everything compared with mass production," they argue. But lean production also involves teamwork, just-in-time production (in which there are low inventories of parts, which are delivered only as needed), integration of product and process development and an emphasis on continuous improvement, or *kaizen*.

Lean production emerged in Japan because of historical peculiarities, including the defeat and weakening of the industry's unions. The "team" terminology, rarely used in Japan, has been emphasized as the method has been imported into the United States by transplanted Japanese factories and increasingly adopted by U.S. companies as well. But Christian Berggren, the Swedish author of a recently published book, *Alternatives to Lean Production*, argues that "platoon," with its connotations of militaristic regimen, might better describe the Japanese work team. Lean production is an extension of, not a departure from, the old mass-production formulas of simplified, repetitive work, Berggren contends. Employees still lack the autonomy and satisfaction that come with creative control over one's work.

Like lean production critics Mike Parker and Jane Slaughter—who prefer to call the system "management by stress"—Berggren argues that the absence of inventory "buffers" means that workers themselves become the buffers. Because the system is so lean—that is, short of supplies and labor (for example, to cover for absent team members)—employees work harder or longer hours to compensate for any production shortfalls. Unlike on traditional assembly lines, workers can pull a cord and stop production if they have problems. But even this is less an expression of worker control than it is a method for management to find breaking points in an overstressed system.

Lean techniques have certainly yielded some impressive results in efficient, high-quality production. But a British academic research team, led by Lancashire Business School professor Karel Williams, claims that the MIT researchers have greatly overstated the Japanese efficiency advantage and downplayed the significant variation among companies using lean-production methods. This variation suggests the advantages of lean techniques can be swamped by other influences.

Even the MIT research suggests that the Japanese gain much of their advantage by designing cars so that they are simple to manufacture. Thus, not all of their efficiency comes from lean organization of work. Japanese factories also get an edge by relying heavily on low-wage, insecure workers at parts-supply plants, though employees of the central firm have lifetime jobs and good pay. The Japanese gain a further advantage from having much longer work hours than is typical in the U.S. and Europe, and from having much less severe business cycles.

In short, lean production—this leading variant of the high-performance workplace—accounts for only part of the Japanese success. Also, parts of lean production and the complementary strategies (like longer work hours) are hard-

ly worth emulating.

Lean is often mean, Wayne State University labor researcher Steve Babson concludes from a study of workers at the Flat Rock, Mich., Mazda plant. After the plant geared up in 1988, workers increasingly complained that they had little control through their teams and that *kaizen* improvements were imposed on them by team leaders controlled by foremen. The plant has also had a very high injury rate.

Berggren concedes that lean production has promoted job security, an egalitarian spirit and a focus on the importance of shopwork, but he says it also rests on an undemocratic domination of workers' lives and time. The team becomes a way to control workers more than a way for workers to control production. He argues that there is a more democratic route that is also more productive than conventional assembly lines, as exemplified by Volvo's factory in Uddevalla, Sweden.

At Uddevalla, workers assembled entire cars in small teams in work cycles measured in hours, not the minutes or seconds of Ford or Toyota assembly lines. Volvo operated in a very different context from the Japanese: with a strong union, a social democratic government and political culture, and a tight labor market in which people reluctantly took factory jobs. Workers not only won great autonomy in work but a strong voice in corporate decisions. Uddevalla workers quickly surpassed Volvo's standard assembly factory in reducing labor time, improving quality and providing great flexibility. But Volvo's market collapsed and Uddevalla was shut down. Although not as efficient as some lean plants, it was still rapidly improving its performance before it closed. It did well enough to challenge the claim that the lean model is the only option.

Much of the lean model is being adopted by other industries, but the spread of more democratic practices has been slow. Why should that be so if the results are positive? In a report issued by the liberal Economic Policy Institute, Eileen Appelbaum and Rosemary Batt suggest that employers are reluctant to reform their workplaces because they fear that other firms might pick off trained workers. Also, there are high initial costs to the strategy, which may take several years to implement fully—and investors look at short-term performance. Businesses fear that competitors following the "low road" of union-bashing, wage-cutting and overseas flight may be able to undercut them enough in the short run to cause great harm. Ultimately, one fundamental barrier is that managers are simply unwilling in most cases to relinquish real power unless they are forced to do so.

One kind of workplace organization that does raise productivity was ignored at the Clinton conference. That's unionization. Unions are also in the forefront of promoting many sound practices—such as extensive job training—and developing new forms of worker decision-making. The Steelworkers won the right to nominate a board member as well as shopfloor decision-making powers, and they persuaded management to join in long-range strategic discus-

sions of industry problems.

Strong unions in Sweden, for example, mean that Volvo's brand of teamwork is much different than "teamwork" in the lean-production model. Sweden's independent unions give workers a voice and protect them from being the shock absorbers for the factory regimen. At Mazda and in some other unionized lean plants, workers are fighting to gain control over the teams and reshape the lean practices.

At the Chicago conference, Labor Secretary Robert Reich acknowledged that unionization was not an impediment to high-performance workplace strategies and that workers did need a voice. But he insisted that "the jury is out on the basis of evidence we have today as to whether unions are necessary or what type of worker organization can contribute best to workers having an effective voice."

It's a big step from the Reagan White House, which broke the air traffic controllers' union in 1981, to the new administration, which talks about the importance of workers and their ideas for the country's economic future. Yet workplace reform is needed for the sake of workers' lives as much as for economic performance.

Moreover, the Clinton administration should not count on workplace reforms and job training to remedy the weaknesses in the economy, which range from trade deficits to rising inequality. The administration should also take more seriously the value, both economic and political, of promoting stronger unions in those workplaces. ◀

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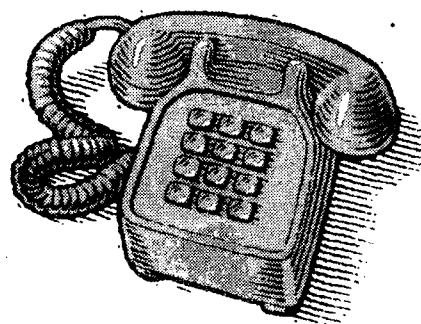
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## EDUCATION

# Fighting for respect

By Andrea N. Jones

Since half the people in the world are women, I used to think that half the world was safe. Now I don't think that way. It seems to me that women are getting meaner and meaner, and that the youngest ones—the girls my age—are the worst.

In California, the proportion of teenage girls behind bars for violent crimes has increased by 11 percent over the last five years. "Girls pick more fights. They get right in your face," a girl in junior high tells me.

James Logan High School, which I attended, was constructed to hold about 1,000 students but now holds three times that number. Simple overcrowding means fights. There were times during my senior year when the freshmen girls seemed to be looking for trouble, shoving their way through packed hallways,

cussing and fussing for the right to their own space.

In my last year of high school, I saw two tiny freshmen beat down a senior like she was a kindergartner. While the senior lay on the hallway floor trying to shield her head, the freshmen were busy stomping on her long black hair with their high-tops after kicking her in the head. The senior tried to mask her humiliation, but I could see the tears.

Once I decided to report on the recent phenomenon, I returned to my high school in the hope that my counselor from last year might point me to some girls concerned about the situation. But since he couldn't quite remember who I was, he told me that I'd have to obtain permission from the principal and get parental approval before I could

talk to any students.

My principal, whose time was taken up shmoozing with adults, was impossible to contact while I was in high school, so I wasn't too surprised when he didn't return my calls. But since fights don't wait for permission to start, I decided I shouldn't either. If administrators had taken the time I did, they'd have seen how much girls have to say about fighting.

Popular culture has decided it's "in" for girls to be rough. The hottest fashion for girls is the thuggish look. The hip-hop hard-core group Apache raps about wanting a "gangsta bitch" for a girlfriend. In the video "Latin Lingo" by Cypress Hill, two Latinas are depicted having a catfight. The camera seems to swoop around at chest level, just in case a breast flops out.

At school, girls who fight may get suspended, but they also get plenty of respect and attention from their friends. While guys have left one-on-one fistfighting behind for guns and gangbanging, girls still do it the old-fashioned way, and some say that makes "girl fights" more fun to watch. "I'd rather look at a girl fight because something might come off," a male friend admits.

Nothing is more apt to trigger a fight between girls than gossip. Myisha McClennon, 16, got jumped at Washington High School in Fremont by eight girls she thought were her friends after a "he said, she said" incident. Her face was swollen for several days. What hurt more, she said, was having her friends turn on her.

Eighteen-year-old Angelica Verdusco, on the other hand, says she fights not over "stupid stuff" like guys and gossip but to stand up for her race. "Girls want to show their pride," she declares. The last fight she had was with a group of black girls who called her and her friends "wetbacks."

Danielle Williams, 14, who is black,



says she's seen more fights lately between black and Mexican girls. "Black girls talk about how high Mexican girls' hair is, the way they dress, all the makeup they wear, which makes the Mexican girls get mad. Other times the Mexican girls call black girls loud, and they get offended."

Many would agree that Logan, like many other high schools around the country, fails to meet the needs of its black and Latino populations. Black girls and Latinas are even further down the list. In many ways they must compete for the status school doesn't allow them—they fight to get respect. As our communities become

more and more complex, financially strapped schools simply cannot respond to such individualized conflicts of race.

At 13, Bernard White Middle School student Allison Sandoval is already a veteran fighter who has twice been suspended from school. Her voice is soft and sweet, and her raisin-colored lipstick matches the hickeys on her neck. Her first fight wasn't intentional. She had confronted a girl she heard was talking about her, and the next thing she knew a crowd had formed around them. The crowds began pushing the two girls together, and suddenly Sandoval found herself swinging.

After that, says Sandoval, her friends pressured her to keep fighting. "If you don't fight this girl for them they think you're not down for your friends." Now, she says, she has a pretty good idea why so many girls fight. "They want to say, 'Don't mess with me.' They want to be seen as troublemakers. They want to be just like the guys and stand out, too." Even her parents pay more attention to her when she's getting into trouble for fighting, Sandoval says.

Even when she wins a fight, she

doesn't often feel proud. "I feel bad, like I've made a mistake. Sometimes I don't even know the girl."

Sandoval is thinking about retiring once she hits high school, but her high school might do little more than suspend her as a deterrent. Instead of being institutions to rehabilitate those who need help, many times schools live up to their reputation as institutions interested only in taking the state's money, graduating as many kids as they can and moving on to the next bunch.

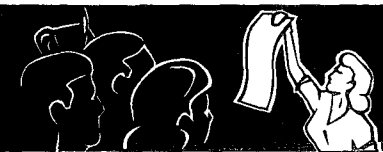
After finishing this piece, I sent a copy to my old counselor along with a note detailing why I felt that he cared more about regulations than kids. The hassle he gave me in high school, I wrote, proved that to me. He wrote back saying that I was bitter and I needed to take ultimate responsibility for any problems I had. He then went on to list all the youth organizations that he'd supported since 1978. He and many administrators like him don't realize that having a list of organizations they "support" doesn't necessarily make a difference in any one kid's life. I needed to know that he supported *me*. My counselor didn't even seem to know there was a problem until I hit him over the head with it.

The teens I talked to were obviously one up on me, and didn't, as they might put it, "waste their time" trying to get through to adults. Teens who were quite eager to talk out their problems with me might not be so inclined with counselors, who these days are administrators in counselors' clothing. They know that when you talk to someone who has no intention of seeing you as anything but a number, you'd have just as much success sharing your feel-

ings with a brick wall. Some administrators are quicker to suspend girls than to help them figure out their problems. The schools seem to be dealing with girls' fights in much the same way they used to with troubles among boys: by throwing out the "troublemakers," while ignoring the real sources of the trouble. ◀

Andrea N. Jones is associate editor of YO! (Youth Outlook), produced in San Francisco by Pacific News Service.

*This article is part of a continuing series on education edited by Alex Molnar, a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The series, "Notes From the Back of the Class," covers a wide range of education-related issues. Contributions from readers are welcome. Manuscripts of no more than 1,000 words should be sent to Alex Molnar c/o In These Times, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.*



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# I N T H E A R T S

## A fistful of yen

# R

ising Sun opens with a scene that is clever testimony to the polyethnic nature of the world we live in, a scene that seems to suggest, at first, that show biz knows no national barriers.

On the soundtrack can be heard the amateurish crooning of an old Broadway hit, "Don't Fence Me In." On the screen is the setting for an American Western as seen through Italian eyes. The spare landscape and Spanish tint to the scenery suggest the kind of "spaghetti Western"—all of which were filmed in Spain—that made Clint Eastwood famous first in Europe and then in America.

A dog wanders down some steps with a human hand in its mouth, in a direct quote from Akira Kurosawa's 1961 samurai

movie, *Yojimbo*, which Sergio Leone remade three years later as Eastwood's first international hit, *A Fistful of Dollars*. Kurosawa, in turn, admittedly had drawn inspiration for *Yojimbo* from a 1942 Hollywood adaptation of Dashiell Hammett's *The Glass Key*, and his cinematic style was influenced by that purveyor of American myth, John Ford.

Clearly, pedigree and nationality can't lay reliable claim to art, and director Philip Kaufman takes *Rising Sun*'s little object lesson even further. What's on the screen under the credits of *Rising Sun* is revealed to be a karaoke video.

The Western scene is populated by Japanese heroes, and the singer himself, the camera shows as it draws back to take in the whole bar scene, is Japanese. This is as good as *Rising Sun* will get. The actor is Cary Hiroyuki-Tagawa, who is usually cast by Hollywood as a yellow-peril henchman. He's still playing Joe Sixpack's worst nightmare in *Rising Sun*, it would seem, for his singing is directed lasciviously at a blond American beauty seated on a barstool.

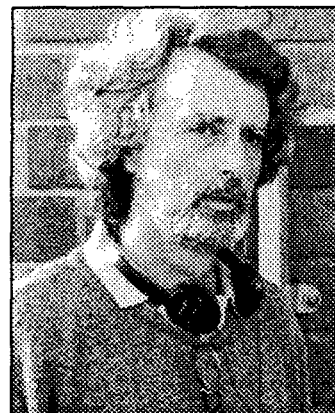
So the ingenious opening scene ends with an appeal to the most lurid racist fears. (*They're after our women! Or worse: Our women are after them!*) *Rising Sun* will return to that theme in more salacious form halfway through the movie, when Hiroyuki-Tagawa, as a wealthy playboy and the

prime suspect in the sexual murder of that blond from the karaoke bar, parties in his pad by dining on sushi offered to him on the nude body of another blond American beauty.

It's all dressed up as art, directed with assurance if not inspiration by Kaufman (*The Right Stuff*, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*) and photographed by Michael Chapman (*Raging Bull*), whose burnished-gold images make *Rising Sun* a visually stunning film.

The movie stars the always likable Sean Connery and Wesley Snipes as two L.A. cops wending their way through the intrigues of a powerful Japanese corporation to catch the murderer. The perpetrator had the bad manners to take out the blond on the boardroom conference table, while, a few floors below, senators and celebrities attended a party celebrating the opening of the company's American headquarters.

What Kaufman, Chapman, Connery, et al are engaged in, however, is dressing up a '90s version of *Fu Manchu*, the original embodiment of the yellow

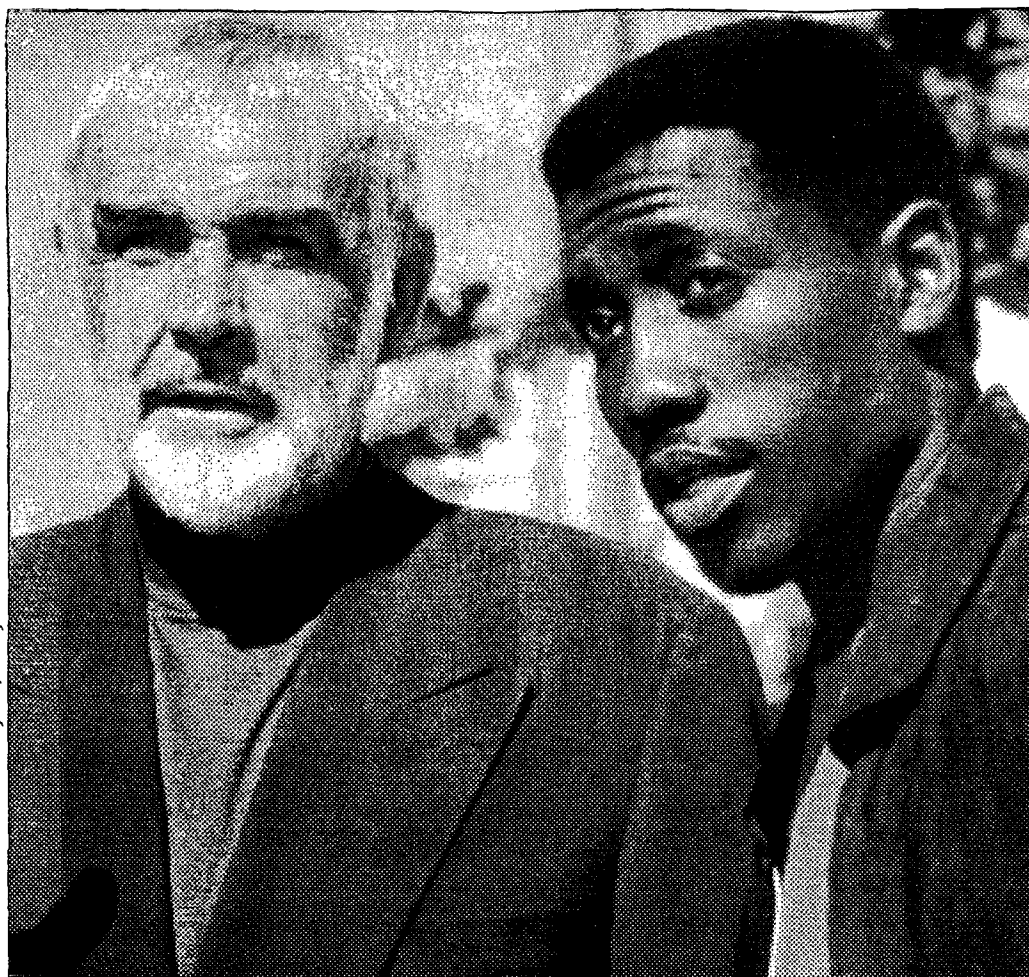


**Rising Sun**  
Directed by Philip Kaufman

**Sean Connery  
and Wesley  
Snipes fight the  
yellow peril,  
'90s-style, in  
Rising Sun.**

By Pat Dowell

Photos ©1993 Twentieth Century Fox, Sidney Baldwin



peril created by Sax Rohmer 70 years ago, when a newly powerful Asia was also at political and economic odds with the West. Connery is basically the great white hope here, the only non-Asian who can match the omnipotence and the omnipresence of the "Orientals."

Connery's character, John Connor, is a Japan expert much in the same way that John Wayne's Westerners were Indian experts. He's lived amongst 'em, knows their ways and respects 'em for their ruthlessness and for following their own code of honor—different as it is, of course, from our more relaxed and compassionate way of life. (Tell *that* to the Haitian boat people.) While Connor compliments the Japanese on their efficiency and enterprise, he manages to deliver a slap with every salute. He's tutoring Wesley Snipes' Web Smith in the same tradition.

Novelist Michael Crichton has said he wrote *Rising Sun*, which topped the best-seller lists for months, as a wake-up call to America about the nature of Japanese competition. We need to know, he says, that to the Japanese, business is war. But in the manner of all the media, Crichton was really just taking generalizations that could be made about American practices and projecting them onto the competition. Nicaragua, Cuba, Chile and a few other places in the world know what it really means when a government—ours—literally makes business equal war.

The movie version of the novel retains this essentially racist hypocrisy, while adding to it a most unedifying attempt to weasel out from under the charge of prejudice. To this end, a few cosmetic changes have been made by Kaufman to the script Crichton wrote with Michael Backes (changes that Crichton has repudiated).

The identity and ethnicity of the murderer have been altered, for instance, in a superficial attempt to make the Japanese look a little more civilized (and perhaps not quite so super-potent). One Japanese character is given the honor of sacrificing his life for the Americans, thus being elevated to the mythic function usually reserved for "colored" sidekicks. The role of the old-fashioned, bigoted white cop, played by Harvey Keitel, has been beefed up too, as

if to say that *this* is what a *real* racist looks like.

And, of course, the young cop, who learns the inscrutable ways of the East from the conflicted Japanophile played by Sean Connery, has been recast as an African-American—which adds curious overtones to the whole enterprise and provides the movie with its key scene. No doubt the intended effect is to suggest the inclusiveness of American society, but the real message seems to be that we should send one minority to root out another.

This is most clearly illustrated when Connery and Snipes are being chased by a carful of Japanese gangsters. Snipes heads for South-Central, telling a skeptical Connery that "rough neighborhoods may be America's last advantage." Once there, he calls on his homeboys to stop the Japanese pursuers, who get treated to a little *Menace II Society*-style intimidation with guns and knives. The professional killers quake in their Armani suits, no match for the boyz n the hood.

The scene, a real crowd-pleaser, recalls Humphrey Bogart's line to the Gestapo in *Casablanca*: "There are parts of New York I advise you not to invade." *Casablanca*, remember, was among other things a deluxe World War II propaganda film, suffused with a wartime hysteria toward the enemy. That's precisely the tone that *Rising Sun* aims for, and achieves.



# I N P R I N T

## Segregation forever?

By Jacqueline Jones

Poverty in contemporary America is a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, national phenomenon. Regardless of whether they hail from the South Bronx or the Mississippi Delta, rural New England or the Midwestern Rust Belt, poor people live in areas that lack good jobs, good schools and adequate housing at affordable prices.

Earlier generations of poor folks seized the opportunity to migrate in search of a better life. In the early 20th century, the grandchildren of slaves journeyed out of the South and into the industrial North; during the '30s, Arkansas and Oklahoma farmers made the trek out of the Dust Bowl and west to California; in the '40s and '50s, Appalachian coal miners sought out factory jobs in the Midwest; and a few decades later unemployed autoworkers decided to try their luck in Sun Belt oil fields. But today, in our perpetually recessionary economy, in our "credentials-conscious" labor market, the poor have little choice but to stay put.

Migration has always come at a cost—in terms of the severed kin relations and neighborhood support networks, the high price of moving one's belongings and family to a new place—and in the '90s people without formal education and marketable skills will remain condemned to ill-paid work in the service sector, wherever they live. Today there is no modern equivalent of the Lower East Side, where poor people might gain a foothold in the industrial economy and help ensure their children (at least) an entrée into the middle class.

Poor communities tend to perpetuate themselves. The insid-

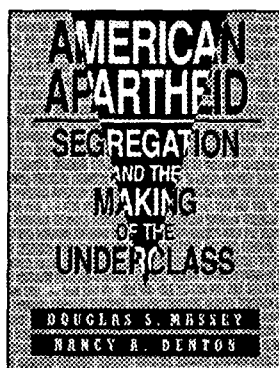
ious system of public school financing means that the nation's poorest neighborhoods have the worst schools. People living in distressed communities—whether in cities or in rural areas, in the North or South—lack access to quality health care and basic services. Good entry-level jobs are, increasingly, few and far away, well outside commuting distance. As people are thrown out of work, the local tax base crumbles, and educational and social services deteriorate accordingly.

Given the importance of place to the study of poverty, Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton's *American Apartheid* is a most welcome contribution to the so-called "underclass debate." The authors, two sociologists, make a compelling case for the proposition that "black poverty is exacerbated, reinforced and perpetuated by racial segregation, that black-white segregation has not moderated despite the federal policies tried so far, and that the social costs of segregation cannot be contained in the ghetto...."

The book offers a powerful indictment of the "gilding-the-ghetto" approach to reform; the authors argue, compellingly, that "the ghetto must be dismantled because only by ending segregation will we eliminate the manifold social and economic problems that follow from its persistence."

Massey and Denton have amassed a wealth of historical and demographic data to show that the ghetto is, to a certain extent, the product of forces that make black Americans uniquely vulnerable to segregation, and hence poverty. The resistance of middle-class and suburban communities to black residents, and, after World War II, the active involvement of the Federal Housing Administration in preserving segregated housing patterns, served to limit the options of blacks on the basis of both their race and class. By the '80s, according to the authors, 16 American cities qualified as "hypersegregated." In those cities blacks were clustered in homogeneous, high-density enclaves near the central business district, isolated from white neighborhoods.

The authors are at their best when they describe the practical manifestations and consequences of discrimination—the covert racism of real estate agents and of bankers who "redline" poor neighborhoods, the complicity of federal officials at all levels of this process. They also describe in some detail the halting progress of middle-class black suburbanization, though here the issue is less clear-cut: middle-class blacks must assess the tradeoffs between the satisfaction of owning a home in the suburbs on the one hand, and (in many cases) leaving behind a whole community support



**American Apartheid:**  
**Segregation and the**  
**Making of the Underclass**  
 By Douglas S. Massey  
 and Nancy A. Denton  
 Harvard University  
 Press  
 292 pp., \$29.95

and service structure—black churches, beauty parlors and social organizations—on the other.

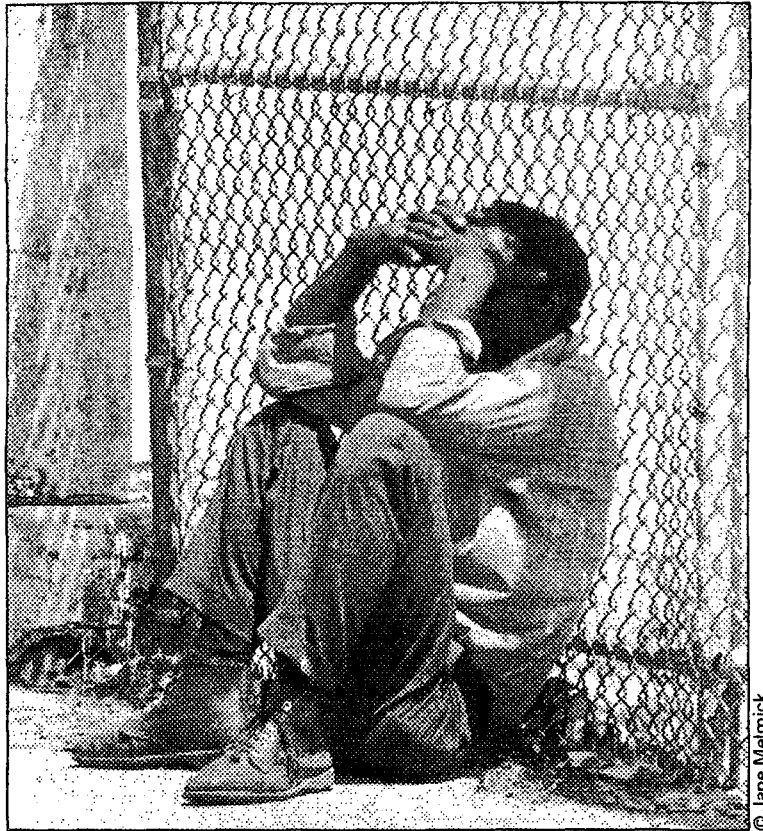
The authors contend that “the persistence of racial segregation in American cities, therefore, is a matter of race and not class.” But this puts the problem too starkly. In focusing on black inner-city communities, the authors ignore the fact that African-American poverty is but a subset of American poverty in general. Indeed, it is possible that the misguided tendency of scholars, politicians, and policy-makers to equate black people with poverty has hindered meaningful change in this area, for Americans in general are hostile to what they perceive as race-specific social programs.

Over the years, white Americans have resisted housing integration because they believe that their new black neighbors will be welfare recipients and wage-laborers rather than lawyers and stockbrokers. This is not simply a matter of racism. In the industrial Midwest during the '40s and '50s, many white suburbanites stereotyped recent migrants from Appalachia in the same way. These newcomers (all of them white) were labeled lazy, promiscuous, clannish and violence-prone—in short, “undesirables.” The history of American suburbanization is, in many ways, the history of white flight away from the poor of many races and ethnic groups, not only blacks.

Massey and Denton suggest that the black poor are worse off compared to the white poor because the former group is more segregated within poor neighborhoods. But this analysis is limited to urban areas and ignores the substantial number of poverty-stricken whites who live in rural areas and small towns. In fact, the very notion of the “underclass” hinders our understanding of poverty, since the term by definition refers to the spatial concentration of the poor, and hence misses the majority of poor people—men, women and children who live outside center cities—altogether.

The authors show that segregation “is crucial to understanding why a self-perpetuating spiral of neighborhood decline is built into urban black communities.” But here again, this spiral is not confined to black ghettos; decaying rust-belt neighborhoods, not necessarily in the urban core, are undergoing the same decline. The authors avoid the fashionable, victim-blaming “culture of poverty” argument, but they show how the proximity of a “red-light” district, a dearth of good jobs and inadequate schools can lead to collective demoralization and weak family structure among urban households.

At times, though, Massey and Denton, much like sociologist William Julius Wilson and many others, confuse spatial segregation with cultural segregation. The poor are very much integrated into “mainstream” American society through mass advertising, television, the movies and popular music. And the “values” promoted by those media—misogyny, rampant materialism and violence—are “values” embraced by the society at large.



© Jane Melnick

Perhaps the greatest strength of *American Apartheid* is its indictment of politicians and civil servants who have acquiesced in, or actively promoted, racial discrimination. The authors argue that white officeholders in large cities “have no direct political interest in [blacks'] welfare,” leaving many black constituents without a political voice. The institutional discrimination of the last 50 years has left an indelible stain on American civic life. Since the federal government has been complicit in the creation of the ghetto, the authors suggest, federal initiatives in the realm of desegregation are both necessary and morally justifiable.

Wisely, they note, “programs to dismantle the ghetto must be accompanied by vigorous efforts to end discrimination in other spheres of American life and by class-specific policies designed to raise educational levels, improve the quality of public schools, create employment, reduce crime and strengthen the family.” This policy wish-list helps to show just why poverty is so intractable. In these days of cutbacks, layoffs and retrenchment, we as a nation would seem to lack the financial resources, the collective will and, perhaps most significantly of all, the political vision to launch a concerted attack on the forces that create and preserve poor places—in other words, the forces that cause poverty. ◀

Jacqueline Jones is Harry S. Truman Professor of American Civilization at Brandeis University. She is the author of *The Dispossessed: America's Underclasses from the Civil War to the Present* and the Bancroft Prize-winning *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow* (both published by Basic Books).

# Man watchers

By Leora Tanenbaum

**A**s newly elected congresswomen were vying for committee assignments and Hillary Rodham Clinton was securing her power base, dozens of articles surfaced about men feeling expendable, powerless and fragile. Garrison Keillor argued in a *New York Times* op-ed essay that doll- and house-playing give girls an edge over toy-gun-toting boys. "Women know about life and about how to get along with others and are sensitive to beauty and can yell louder," he complained. "Which gender is better equipped to manipulate the other?"

A recent *Newsweek* poll indicated that 48 percent of white American men feel they are "losing influence" in our society. An Orlando man wrote to *Men's Health* that "[f]eminism is all about women making choices. How come men never get to? Women make the 'choice' to have a baby or not, the 'choice' to have a career, the 'choice' to stay home with their kids or go back to work. Men, on the other hand, get the 'responsibility' to work all day to support them."

The publishing industry, too, has caught on to the trend; the shelves of bookstores are clotted with recently published books on male vulnerability—from *The Myth of Male Power* by Warren Farrell (Ph.D.) to *In a Time of Fallen Heroes: The Recreation of Masculinity* by two Williams, Betcher and Pollack, who have accumulated two Ph.D.s and an M.D. between them.

The books—some of them polemics, some social and psychological histories—share a common complaint. By and large, the authors assert that men are constrained by rigid social expectations that dictate emotional distance, heterosexuality, breadwinning responsibility and a competitive edge. A crisis over masculinity is erupting, they say: because the economic crunch has permanently altered future

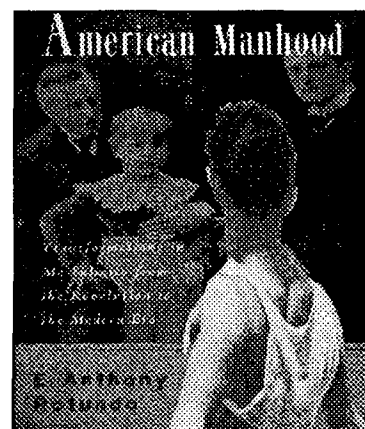
employment prospects for most Americans, men no longer possess breadwinning power. As a result, men are beginning to realize that the image of the manly man is, at bottom, vacuous and even dangerous. "Just as women have been oppressed by the cultural idea of the slim, always nurturant female, which has straitjacketed their bodies as well as their minds, men have also been shortchanged by a stereotype," maintain Betcher and Pollack.

"We have all learned a set of cultural types—the tough man and the tender, the real man and the sissy that have been accumulating cultural sanction for a century now," argues E. Anthony Rotundo in *American Manhood*. Such rigid roles hurt "all men because they lose access to stigmatized parts of themselves—tenderness, nurturance, the desire for connection, the skills of cooperation—that are helpful in personal situations and needed for the social good."

The bottom line? Men are victims, too. While many of these authors admit that women and children also suffer from men's inability to create interpersonal networks, most argue that the greatest victims are men themselves.

Warren Farrell, author of *The Myth of Male Power*, tosses ominous statistics into the mix—for every murdered woman, for example, there are three men. More important, he makes the larger point that men are socialized to be soldiers and workers, and are therefore deemed "disposable" beings. "We have not demanded that both sexes equally share the hazardous jobs and the risks of dying," he writes. "Our slogan for women is 'A woman's body, a woman's choice.' Our slogan for men is 'A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do.'"

The preferred solution in these accounts is



## The Myth of Male Power

By Warren Farrell

Simon & Schuster, 446 pp., \$23

## In a Time of Fallen Heroes: The Recreation of Masculinity

By William Betcher and William Pollack

Atheneum, 320 pp., \$22.50

## Fatherhood in America:

### A History

By Robert Griswold

Basic Books, 356 pp., \$24

## American Manhood:

### Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era

By E. Anthony Rotundo

Basic Books, 382 pp., \$25

## Man Enough: Fathers, Sons, and the Search for Masculinity

By Frank Pittman

Putnam, 286 pp., \$23.95



active fatherhood, so that future men, today's boys, will not grow up under the suffocating tutelage of mythic masculinity. Fatherhood will help men get in touch with their "inner selves"—to enable them to better communicate with their female partners and with other men—and also ensure the emotional health of their sons.

"Our fathers didn't teach us how to live with our masculinity, and our mothers and our wives, no matter how hard they try, can't do it, either. ... No matter how good a job a woman does in teaching a boy how to be a man, he knows that she is not the real thing, and so he tends to exaggerate the differences between men and women that she embodies," writes Frank Pittman, author of *Man Enough*. In other words: women, step aside—this is a man's job.

Most of the new batch of New Men watchers are quick to distance themselves from Robert Bly, for they do not wish to be associated with his movement and its ahistorical, unchanging construction of masculinity. But the authors share much in common with the trumpeters of the men's movement. They lump all men and all women together as characteristic classes, ignoring the simple fact that there is enormous variation *within* each gender group. The psychological angst they describe belongs to white, heterosexual men who happen to be married with young children. Some of these authors devote token space to the problems of black or working-class men, but it's a small slice within the growing body of literature. Single mothers aren't given any advice; daughters are given only a cursory nod.

There's no doubt about it—gender regulations *do* hurt everyone, for they pigeonhole us, even before we are born.

But while women and men may both be constrained by their sex role, each gender is harnessed quite differently. As feminist writer Katha Pollitt notes, "For women, moving into the male world has meant moving into the world of

economic independence, acquiring mastery of skills and being able to stand on their own two feet. But for men, moving into the female world is quite different. You don't hear these guys saying, 'Hey, let's be secretaries.' I think that men want to keep the privileges they enjoy and like, and give up the ones that now seem burdensome."

While *emotionally* (white, straight) men may be starving, their plate is heaped with institutional power. For no matter how you look at it, power is still distributed unequally in this country. Women aged 24 to 35 earn only 80 cents for every dollar earned by men of the same age, despite the Year of the Woman hoopla. And guess who does the bulk of the household maintenance, even in two-income families. The old economic and social roles remain mostly intact, despite some advances. (Few of the current crop of man watchers, with the notable exception of Rotundo, are willing to acknowledge these simple facts.)

Many of the authors, in fact, contend that current gender arrangements hurt them *just as much* as women. Farrell, who was once called "the Gloria Steinem of men's liberation" and who served on the board of directors of NOW

until he realized, as he put it, that he'd "been listening to women but not ... to men," best typifies the paranoid anti-feminist reaction. His cry is, in part, a backlash against a type of feminism that presumes all men are aggressors and rapists. Those who concentrate their energies on protesting pornography and date rape position women as a morally superior



sisterhood of victims and men as a class of villains. Farrell confuses this single-minded, finger-pointing feminist faction with *all* of feminism.

"It will be tempting to discuss [my] book with a feminist because that's probably the person you know who's most interested in sex roles," he writes. "But this is like a man bringing a book that questions the Bible to a born-again Christian because that's the person you know who's most interested in religion. The person who studies their Bible daily is the least likely to question their Bible fairly." Or, to put it more bluntly: feminists have nothing to say to men.

Ellen Willis, former *Village Voice* editor and author of the recent collection *No More Nice Girls* (see *In These Times*, June 14), laments that the anti-porn strand of feminism, fed by the strength of cultural conservatism, has generated a kind of anti-sexual hysteria. The result is that "there is no public language that really allows us to talk about male dominance on the level of everyday life, except [that of] violence. And since we have a feminist movement that has, in some sense, abdicated taking heterosexuality and masculinity seriously, then there is a vacuum to be filled by these guys."

Just as you can't discuss racism without analyzing the privilege of whiteness, it is impossible to talk about gender without addressing masculinity; it's par for the course. But, Willis points out, while there *are* serious attempts among those on the left to understand whiteness, most feminist analysis of masculinity has been one-dimensional.

As a result, these men fail to unpack their stereotyped baggage. They resort to reactionary assertions about male-female relationships, arguing that women are a feared species with formidable powers to belittle men. Pittman likens "women's anger" to "the wrath of an angry god." Farrell actually reports the rumors that Anita Hill handed back assignments to her law students strewn with pubic hairs.

These writers also consider gender relations solely within the home, sidestepping crucial work-related issues: What if a husband is offered a promotion involving a move to another

city? What if the wife is? What if one of them is in a profession that demands heavy overtime? Will the other be forced to choose a career that allows him or her more time at home? Is one partner's career going to be developed at the expense of the other? If so, which one?

Presumably, the authors believe that men should work fewer hours so they can be active fathers, but nowhere do they discuss the necessary corollary—allowing women full job and salary equality. Only Farrell specifically pushes work reform, arguing that men should not have to bear the responsibility of providing for women. No one proposes that women should earn as much as men do—which would mean, given how the economy operates, that they would have to earn less.

Notwithstanding the contention of Robert Griswold, author of the history *Fatherhood in America*, that "millions of fathers are becoming more involved with their children, and millions more express the desire to do so," women still do most of the child care, even though mothers of young children are in the workforce in record numbers. (In households where both parents work, the wife does 80 percent of the cooking and 70 percent of the child care.) In fact, Griswold himself contradictorily states that in the past 30 years men's investment in child rearing has actually *declined* because men now "spend less time in living arrangements where there is an opportunity to occupy the role of the father."

Pollitt is quick to remind us that when the man *is* doing child care, the woman is cleaning the bathroom. "Housework is still a female role. What these guys are really saying is, 'We want to take on the more appealing parts of the female role.'" It's true. Scrubbing toilets, for some reason, has not been "reclaimed," even by the most sensitive of men. ◀

Leora Tanenbaum is a critic living in Brooklyn, N.Y. She has written for *The Nation*, *Z* magazine and *The Women's Review of Books*.

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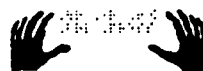
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Continued from page 40

Stroll into any bar in Texas, and you can be pretty sure of finding a handful of inbred rednecks talking about the superiority of their shallow gene pool. That's not news. But add a few thousand do-good lefties desperate for something to be indignant about, and—presto!—you have a media event in the making.

The demonstration could have been mistaken for a Grateful Dead concert. People turned up long before the Klan was due to arrive (perhaps, like at a Dead show, to get the choice seats). They played drums, they danced, they sold T-shirts. It was a carnival atmosphere for a carnival act: *Step right up, folks! Yes, for one day only—racists! In the flesh!* For those of us in the audience, treating hatemongers as a freak-show act was a way of easing our guilt, of distancing ourselves from racism.

But maybe the lines weren't so clear, after all. From the center of the crowd rose a huge monument with statues of Jefferson Davis and four Confederate soldiers. The monument's granite walls, which bear an inscription asserting the South's constitutional right to practice slavery, are polished regularly at taxpayers' expense.

The Klan's arrival was, of course, the very epitome of anti-climax. Amid a heavy police escort, a couple dozen scared yokels climbed off a high-security bus, looking as though they'd taken a wrong turn on the way to the tractor pull. They were accompanied by a bunch of blushing skin-heads, trying to act tough but coming off more like a prema-

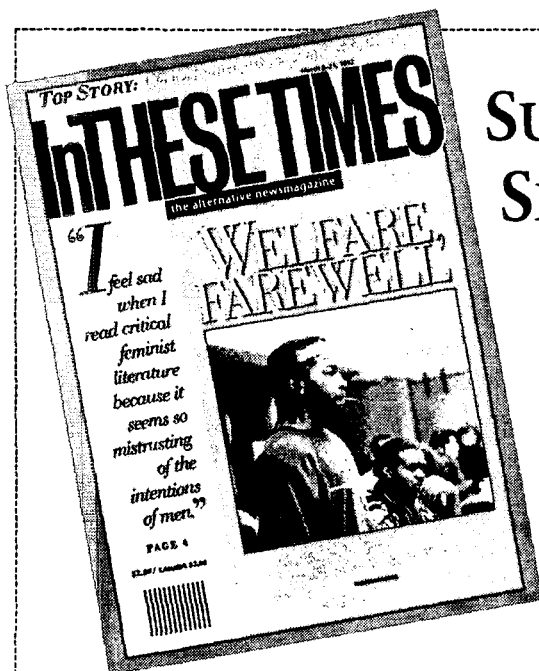
turely bald 4-H Club. If these losers are to be the foot soldiers of the Fourth Reich, the world has nothing to fear.

The ralliers offered obligatory Nazi salutes. The crowd members, many of whom carried placards preaching love and tolerance, responded by extending their middle fingers. Some sad rube—pleased to be the center of attention for once in his life—went up to the microphone and began spewing the usual Hitlerisms. The anti-Klanners booed with gusto. They, too, seemed happy for the opportunity. It went on like that, a mutual exercise in self-righteousness, until both sides got tired of feeling superior and went home.

Thirty years ago, the Rev. King declared: "I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plains, and the the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."

The only preacher on hand in Austin, however, was a bored-looking man with his own little public-address system at the edge of the crowd. He had a different dream. "The end is coming," he said. "It's going to be sudden and bloody."

Several thousand people showed up to show up the Klan. Across town, artists, musicians, writers and activists held a multicultural celebration of King's life. When I got there, the audience totaled less than 20. Who would want to be at an event such as this? There was no one to hate, nothing to protest. ◀



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N Z A I N S

# Protesting too much

By Miles Harvey

You'll find me on my couch, quite immobile, during the "30th Anniversary Mobilization" to commemorate Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. In fact, I think we on the left should use the anniversary of the famous March on Washington to reflect on whether we should be marching at all anymore. We waste a lot of money and time on mass protests, with ever-diminishing returns.

When a quarter of a million civil rights demonstrators showed up in Washington on Aug. 28, 1963, it was big news. Huge protests, which became the central vehicle of left activism for the next three decades, were still relatively rare then. Politicians and pundits weren't yet accustomed to such events.

But these days, some group or other is always marching on Washington. And hardly anyone in power notices. The

1 million gay rights protesters who flooded the streets of the capital in April were lucky to make the front page of their hometown papers.

Worse, such protests often serve to marginalize an already marginal left. Those of us who demonstrated against the Gulf War came off on TV like a bunch of nostalgic hippies and hippie wannabes. And I'm not sure that image was so inaccurate. Many of the people I marched with in anti-Gulf War protests seemed disturbingly pleased to be able to sing the old songs, talk the old talk. The world was simple again, with clear good guys and bad guys. More than demonstrating against the war, we seemed to be trying to demonstrate our own self-worth.

Nowhere was this problem made more clear to me than at a protest I attended against a Ku Klan Klan rally outside the Texas State Capitol in Austin this past January. The Klan had scheduled the rally, of course, to befoul the Martin Luther King holiday. But I think King himself would have urged us all to just stay home.

King knew that the effectiveness of such protests hinges on confrontation, on making one's opponents furious. In his desegregation campaigns, King *needed* the water cannons, the dogs, the screaming bigots. One of his rare defeats came in Albany, Ga., where the shrewd police chief, Laurie Pritchett, gave the civil rights leader round-the-clock protection and ordered his cops not to harm or insult the demonstrators. As a result, the TV networks got no thrilling film footage for the nightly news, and the Albany campaign faded in failure. "We killed them with kindness," a local official had chuckled at the time.

You'd think those who admire King would have learned from this event. But no. Three decades later in Austin, it was the Ku Klux Klan that was employing King's tactics—and using us "progressives" as its stooges.

*Continued on page 39*

